



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600042579X

34.

96.





THE  
**ART OF BEING HAPPY.**



THE  
**ART OF BEING HAPPY,**

FROM THE FRENCH OF DROZ,

“SUR L'ART D'ETRE HEUREUX;”

IN

A SERIES OF LETTERS FROM A FATHER  
TO HIS CHILDREN:

WITH

OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS.

---

BY TIMOTHY FLINT,

*Author of “The History and Geography of the Mississippi Valley.”*

---

“ —— sua si bona nōrint.” —**VIRGIL.**



LONDON:  
JACKSON AND WALFORD,  
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.

---

1834.

96.

**LONDON:**

Printed by J. S. HODSON, 15, Cross Street, Hatton Garden.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

---

THE text upon which the following observations and comments are based, does not assume to be a literal translation of the celebrated work of Droz. The original is strongly idiomatic ; and the author has carried an uncommon talent of being laconic sometimes to the point of obscurity. I have often found it impossible to convey to the English reader a sentiment, perfectly obvious in the original, in as few words as are there used. The French, in its more numerous articles, more allowable and bold personifications, and arbitrary use of gender, has, in the hand of certain writers, this advantage over our language. When the doctrines of the book are compared one with the other, and each with the general bearing of the work, the inculcation, namely, of the truth that *virtue is happiness*, there will be found nothing immoral or reprehensible in it. The author, on the whole, leans to the Epicurean philosophy. Unfavourable, though erroneous impressions have been very generally entertained of that philosophy. In deference to that opinion, I have altogether omitted the few sentences which seemed appropriate to some

of the dogmas of the Epicureans. Nothing can be more remote from their alleged impiety, than the general tenor of this work. One of its most eloquent and impressive chapters is that upon religion. There is a distinct class in France, both numerous and important, the *literatures*. Many of the remarks of the author, bearing chiefly upon that class, seemed inapplicable or unintelligible in our country, where there is no such class to address. I have passed over many passages and parts of chapters, which had an almost exclusive reference to persons in that walk in life. I have added members of sentences, and even whole sentences to the text, where such additions seemed necessary to develope the doctrine to an English reader.

In a word, I do not offer the text, as an exact translation, but as the only treatise within the compass of my reading, which has discussed the pursuit of happiness as a science or an art, and as one which has advanced more eloquent and impressive sentiments upon the subject, than I have elsewhere met. With the slight alterations which I have made, I have found this book to meet my own thoughts; and I have laid out of the text all phrases and passages which spoke otherwise. I have availed myself of the words of another, because they have expressed my own views better than I could have hoped to express them myself. This explanation will be my reply to all remarks touching mistranslation or liberties taken with the author.

## CONTENTS.

---

	Page.
LETTER I.—Introduction .....	1
— II.—The Physical, Organic, and Moral Laws .....	8
— III.—The same subject continued .....	25
— IV.—General views of the subject.....	40
— V.—Our Desires .....	46
— VI.—Tranquillity of Mind .....	53
— VII.—Of Misfortune .....	60
— VIII.—Of Independence.....	68
— IX.—Of Health .....	75
— X.—Of Competence.....	85
— XI.—Of Opinion, and the Affection of Men .....	92
— XII.—Of the Sentiment Men ought to inspire .....	98
— XIII.—Of some of the Virtues .....	103
— XIV.—Of Marriage.....	111
— XV.—Of Children .....	121
— XVI.—Of Friendship .....	128
— XVII.—The Pleasures of the Senses.....	133
— XVIII.—The Pleasures of the Heart.....	139
— XIX.—The Pleasures of the Understanding .....	144
— XX.—The Pleasures of the Imagination .....	149
— XXI.—Melancholy .....	154
— XXII.—Religious Sentiments.....	160

	Page.
LETTER XXIII.—Of the Rapidity of Life.....	169
— XXIV.—On Death .....	176
— XXV.—Conclusion of Droz “ <i>Sur l'Art d'Etre Heureuse</i> ” .....	182
— XXVI.—The Choice of a Profession.....	188
<hr/>	
NOTES .....	199—313

THE  
ART OF BEING HAPPY.

---

LETTER I.

THE following thoughts, my dear children, are those of an affectionate father going out of life, to those he most loves, who are coming forward in it. I am perfectly aware, that nothing but time can impart all the dear-bought instruction of experience. Upon innumerable questions that relate to life, you will receive efficient teaching, only by reaping the fruit of your own errors. But one who has preceded you on the journey, who has listened to the impressive oracles of years, may impart some aid, if you will listen with docility, to enable you to anticipate the lessons of experimental acquaintance with the world. In what I am about to write, I trust I may bring you this aid. As you embark on the uncertain voyage, I cannot but hope, that your filial piety will incline you to a frequent recurrence to the parental chart. You are aware that circumstances have brought me into contact with all conditions, and into a view of all the aspects of life. I ought, therefore, to be qualified to impart useful lessons upon the evils and dangers of inexperience. You, at least, will not see

assumption in such lessons, when they result from the remembrance of my own errors. You may consider what follows, whether it be my own remarks, or what I have adopted from others, as the gleanings of experimental instruction, from what I have myself seen, felt, suffered, or enjoyed ; and as my comments upon the influence, which my election of alternatives has had upon the amount of my own enjoyment or suffering.

You will find enough who are ready to inspire you with indifference or disdain for such counsels. They will indolently, and yet confidently, assure you, that the theoretical discussion of the pursuit of happiness, is, of all visionary investigations, the most profitless and inapplicable; that lecture, write, preach, as we may, the future will be, perhaps ought to be, as the past; that the world is always growing older, without ever growing wiser; and that men are evidently no more successful in their search after happiness now, than in the remotest periods of recorded history. They will affirm that man has always been the sport of accident, the slave of his passions, the creature of circumstances; that it is useless to reason, vain to consult rules, imbecile to surrender independence, to follow the guidance of those who assume to be wise, or receive instruction from those who have been taught by years. They will allege the utter inefficacy of the lights of reason, philosophy, and religion, judging from the little illumination which they have hitherto shed upon the paths of life. On the same ground, and from the same reasonings, they might declaim against every attempt in every form to render the world wiser and happier. With equal propriety they might say, 'Close the pulpit, silence the press, cease

from parental discipline, moral suasion, and the training of education. Do what you will, the world will go on as before.' Who does not see the absurdity of such language? Because we cannot do every thing, shall we do nothing? Because the million float towards the invisible future without any pole-star, or, guided only by the presumption of general opinion, is it proof conclusive, that none have been rendered happier in consequence of having followed wiser guidance, and pursued happiness by system?

Such is the practical creed of the great mass with whom you will be associated in life. I, on the contrary, think entirely with the French philosopher, whose precepts you are about to read, that this general persuasion is palpably false and fatal; that much suffering may be avoided, and much enjoyment obtained by following rules, and pursuing happiness by system; that I have had the fortune to meet with numbers, who were visible proofs that men may learn how to be happy. I am confident that the far greater portion of human suffering is of our own procuring, the result of ignorance and mistaken views, and that it is a superfluous and unnecessary mixture of bitterness in the cup of human life. I firmly believe that the greater number of deaths, instead of being the result of specific diseases, to which they are attributed, are really caused by a series of imperceptible malign influences, springing from corroding cares, griefs, and disappointments. To say that more than half of the human race die of sorrow, and a broken heart, or in some way fall victims to their passions, may seem like advancing a revolting doc-

trine; but it is, nevertheless, in my mind, a simple truth.

We do not *see* the operations of grief upon some one or all the countless frail and delicate constituents of human life. But if physiology could look through the infinitely complicated web of our structure with the power of the solar microscope, it would behold every chagrin searing some nerve, paralyzing the action of some organ, or closing some capillary; and that every sigh draws its drop of life-blood from the heart. Nature is slow in resenting her injuries; but the memory of them is indelibly impressed, and treasured up for a late, but certain revenge. Nervousness, lowness of spirits, head-ache, and all the countless train of morbid and deranged corporeal and mental action, are, at once, the cause and the effect of sorrow and anxiety, increased by a constant series of action and re-action. Thought and care become impressed upon the brow. The bland essence of cheerfulness evaporates. The head becomes shorn of its locks; and the frosts of winter gather on the temples. These concurrent influences silently sap the stamina of life; until, aided by some adventitious circumstance, which we call cold, fever, epidemic, dyspepsia—death lays his hand upon the frame that by the sorrows and cares of life was prepared for his dread office. The bills of mortality assign a name to the mortal disease different from the true one.

Cheerfulness and equanimity are about the only traits that have invariably marked the life of those who have lived to extreme old age. Nothing is more

clearly settled by experience, than that grief acts as a slow poison, not only in the immediate infliction of pain, but in gradually impairing the powers of life, and in subtracting from the sum of our days.

If, then, by any process of instruction, discipline, and mental force, we can influence our circumstances, banish grief and create cheerfulness, we can, in the same degree, reduce rules, for the pursuit of happiness, to a system; and make that system a matter of science. Can we not do this? The very million who deride the idea of seeking for enjoyment through the medium of instruction, unconsciously exercise the power in question to a certain extent—though not to the extent of which they are capable. All those wise individuals who have travelled with equanimity and cheerfulness through the diversified scenes of life, making the most of its good and the least of its evils, bear a general testimony to the truth of this fact. We find in them a conviction that they had such power, and a force of character that enabled them to act according to their convictions.

No person deserves the name of a philosopher, who is not wise in relation to the great purpose of life. In the same proportion, then, as I convince you, that by our own voluntary, physical, and mental discipline, we can act upon circumstances, and influence our temperament, and thus bear directly upon our happiness, I shall be able to stir up your powers, and call forth your energy of character, to apply that discipline in your own case. In the same proportion I shall be instrumental in training you to the highest exercise of your reason and the attainment of true philosophy.

The elements upon which you are to operate, are your circumstances, habits, and modes of thinking and acting. The *philosopher of circumstances*\* denies that you can act upon these. But, by his unwearied efforts to propagate his system, he proves, that he does not himself act upon his avowed convictions. The impulse of all our actions from birth to death, the spring of all our movements, is a conviction that we can alter and improve our condition. We have a consciousness stronger than our reason, that we can control our circumstances. We can change our regimen and habits; and by patience and perseverance, even our temperament. Every one can cite innumerable and most melancholy instances of those who have done it for evil. The habit of indulging in opium, tobacco, ardent spirits, or any of the pernicious narcotics, soon reduces the physical and mental constitution to that temperament, in which these stimulants are felt to be necessary. A corresponding change is produced in the mind and disposition. The frequent and regular use of medicine, though it may have been wholly unnecessary at first, finally becomes an inveterate habit. No phenomenon of physiology is more striking, than the facility with which the human constitution immediately commences a conformity to whatsoever change of circumstances, as of climate, habit, or aliment, we impose upon it. It is a most impressive proof, that the Creator has formed man capable of becoming the creature of all climates and conditions.

If we may change our temperament both of body and

\* E. g. Robert Owen and others of the atheistical school.

mind for evil, as innumerable examples prove that we may, why not as easily for good? Our habits certainly are under our control; and our modes of thinking, however little the process may have been explained, are, in some way, shaped by our voluntary discipline. We have high powers of self-command, as every one who has made the effort to exercise them must be conscious. We have inexhaustible moral force for self-direction, if we will only recognise and exert it. We owe most of our disgusts and disappointments, our corroding passions and unreasonable desires, our fretfulness, gloom, and self-torment, neither to nature nor fate; but to ourselves, and our reckless indifference to those rules that ought to guide our pursuit of happiness. Let a higher education and a truer wisdom disenthral us from our passions, and dispel the mists of opinion and silence the authority of example. Let us commence the pursuit of happiness on the right course, and seek it where alone it is to be found. Equanimity and moderation will shed their mild radiance upon our enjoyments; in our reverses we shall summon resignation and force of character; and, according to the sublime ancient maxim, we shall become masters of events and of ourselves.

I am sensible that there will always be a sufficient number of those, deemed philosophers, who, notwithstanding their rules, have wandered far from their aim. Such there will always be, so long as there are stirring passions within or hidden dangers around us; and there will be shipwrecks, so long as human cupidity and ambition tempt self-confident and unskilful mariners upon the fickle and tumultuous bosom of the ocean.

But is this proof that a disciplined pilot would not be most likely to make the voyage in safety, or that the study of navigation is useless?

My affectionate desire is, to draw your attention to those moral resources which your Creator has placed at your command. How many millions have floated down the current in the indolent supineness of inactivity, who, had they been aware of their internal means of active resistance, would have risen above the pressure of their circumstances! Who can deny that there is a manifest difference, even as things now are, between the moral courage of action and endurance, put forth by a disciplined and reflecting mind possessing force of character, and the stupid and passive abandonment with which a savage meets pain and death?

May you speed on your voyage under the influence of the *lucida sidera*, or, in higher phrase, may Providence be your guide.

---

## LETTER II.

### THE PHYSICAL, ORGANIC, AND MORAL LAWS.

In relation to this most important subject, read *Combe on the Constitution of Man*, a book which I consider admirable for its broad, philosophic, and just views of the laws of the universe, in their bearing upon the constitution of our physical and moral nature. You are

not unaware, that I had presented you similar views, and inculcated the same master principles, long before this excellent work was published. Thousands, in all ages, have entertained the same extended conceptions of the divine plan, and its bearing upon man and all beings, upon this and all other worlds. But the honour belongs to this author, to have given form and systematic arrangement to these views. I have given my thoughts upon this subject at the commencement of my letters, and have subjoined remarks upon the Christian religion at the close, because I deem that M. Droz, in not recurring to these fundamental principles at the beginning of his work, and in dwelling with so little earnestness upon the hope of the gospel, as an element of happiness, at the close, has left chasms in it which ought to be supplied.

The sect, numerous in my day, in yours, I trust, will have disappeared, who hold that religion and philosophy are militant and irreconcileable principles. Such persons are accustomed to brand these broad views of Providence and moral obligation with the odium of impiety. You will hardly need my assurance, that, if I thought with them, *my right hand should forget its cunning*, before I would allow anything to escape my pen which might have the least tendency to impair in your minds the future and eternal sanctions of virtue. I shall hereafter enlarge upon my persuasion, that, so far from being in opposition, religion and philosophy, when rightly understood, will be found resting on the same immutable foundation. It is because the misguided friends of religion have attempted to sustain them, as separate and hostile interests, in my view,

that the former has made so little progress towards becoming universal. It will one day be understood, that whatever wars with reason and common sense, is equally hostile to religion. The simple and unchangeable truths of Christianity will be found to violate none of our most obvious convictions. Truth will reassume her legitimate reign. Piety, religion, and morals, our best interests for this life, and our surest preparations for a future one, will be found exactly conformable to the eternal order of things, and the system of the gospel will become universal, according to its legitimate claims. True piety, in my mind, is equally our duty, our wisdom, and happiness. To behold God everywhere in his works, to hold communion with him in a contemplative and admiring spirit, to love, and trust him, to find, in the deep and constantly present persuasion of his being and attributes, a sentiment of exhaustless cheerfulness and excitement to duty, I hold to be the source of the purest and sublimest pleasure that earth can afford.

True philosophy unfolds the design of final causes with a calm and humble wisdom. It finds the Creator everywhere, and always acting in wisdom and power. It traces the highest benevolence of intention, where the first aspect showed no apparent purpose, or one that seemed to tend to misery ; offering new inducements to learn the first and last lesson of religion, and the ultimate attainment of human wisdom—resignation to the will of God. In vindicating his ways to men, it declares that so long as we do not understand the laws of our being, and so long as we transgress them, either ignorantly, or wilfully and unconsciously, misery

to ourselves must just as certainly follow as that we can neither resist nor circumvent them ; and that the Omnipotent has forged every link of the chain that connects our own unhappiness with every transgression of the laws of our nature.

We find ourselves making a part of an existing universe which neither ignorance nor wisdom, doubting nor confidence can alter. If we know the order of which we are the subjects, and conform to it, we are happy. If we ignorantly or wilfully transgress it, the order is in no degree changed or impeded. It moves irresistibly on, and the opposition is crushed. How wisdom and benevolence are reconcilable with the permission of this ignorance and opposition ; in other words, why partial evil exists in God's universe, it is not my object to inquire. The inquiry would not only be fruitless, but would in no degree alter the fact, that what we call evil does exist. It is enough for us to know that, as far as human research has reached, or can reach, the more profoundly we investigate the subject, the more clearly are design, wisdom, and benevolence discoverable. Beyond our ken, right reason, guided by humility, would infer, that, where we cannot trace the impress of these attributes, it is not because they are not discoverable, but because our powers are not equal to the discovery. If we had a broader vision, and were more fully acquainted with the relations of all parts of God's universe, the one to the other, and all the reasons of the permanent ordinances of his government, we should be able to understand the necessity of partial evil to the general good ; we should understand why it rains on the waste ocean,

when drought consigns whole countries to aridity and desolation ; in a word, why ignorance, transgression, misery, and death have a place in our system.

All that we now know is, that the natural laws of this system are universal, invariable, unbending ; that physical and moral tendencies are the same all over our world ; and, we have every reason to believe, over all other worlds. Wherever moral beings keep in harmony with these laws, there is no instance in which happiness is not the result. Men never enjoy health, vigour, and felicity in disobedience to them. The whole infinite contrivance of everything above, around, and within us, appears directed to certain benevolent issues ; and all the laws of nature are in perfect harmony with the whole constitution of man.

I shall not enter upon the subtle controversies of moral philosophers, as to the fundamental principle of moral obligation, whether it be expediency, the nature of things, or the will of God ? In my view these are rather questions about words than things. The nature of things is a part of the will of God ; and expediency is conformity to this unchanging order. An action derives its moral complexion from being conformed to the will of God and the nature of things ; and whatever is so conformed is expedient ; consequently all the different foundations of morals, when examined, are found to be precisely the same.

My notions of morality are, that it is conformity to the physical, organic, and moral laws of the universe. Some will choose to call it expediency ; others, the will of God ; and others still, the constitution of things. These views, when reduced to their elements, are the

same, call them by what names we may. We may obviously divide these laws into three classes. The first series we call physical laws, or those which act upon the material universe, and upon ourselves as a part of that universe. The second we call organic, or those which regulate the origin, growth, well-being, and dissolution of organized beings. The last, denominated moral, act chiefly on the intellectual universe. They are founded on our relations to the sentient universe and God.

We infer from analogy, that these laws always have been, are, and always will be, invariably the same; and that they prevail alike in every portion of God's universe. We so judge, because we believe the existing order of things to be the wisest and the best. We know that the physical laws actually do prevail alike in every part of our world; and as far beyond it as the highest helps of astronomy can aid our researches into the depths of immensity. Is it not probable, that if we could investigate the system as far as the utmost stretch of thought, we should find no point where the laws of gravity, light, heat, and motion do not prevail; where the sentient beings are not restricted to the same moral relations as in our world? Wherever the empire of science has extended, we note these laws equally prevalent, in a molecule and a world, and from the lowest order of sentient beings up to man. The arrangement of the great whole, it should seem, must be a single emanation from the same wisdom and will, perfectly uniform throughout the whole empire. What an impressive motive to study these laws and conform to them, is it, to know that they are as irresistible

as the divine power, as universal as the divine presence, as permanent as the divine existence;—that there is no evading them, that no art can disconnect misery from transgressing them, that no change of place or time, that not death, nor any transformation which our conscious being can undergo, will, during the revolutions of eternity, dispense any more with the necessity of observing these laws, than during our present transitory existence in clay!

I need not dwell a moment upon the proofs of the absolute identity of the physical laws. No one need be told that a ship floats, water descends, heat warms, and cold freezes, and that all physical properties of matter are the same over the globe. We shall only show by a few palpable examples, that our system is arranged in conformity to the organic laws. Every discovery in the kingdom of animated nature, develops new instances.

In the tropical regions, the muscular energy is less, in proportion as the natural fertility of the soil is greater. In colder latitudes muscular energy is increased; and ruder elements, and a more steril nature, proportion their claims accordingly. In arctic regions, no farinaceous food ripens. Sojourners in that climate, find that bread and vegetable diet do not furnish the requisite nutriment; that pure animal food is the only sustenance that will there maintain the tone of the system, imparting a delightful vigour and buoyancy of mind. Strange as it may seem to conform to this necessity, these dreary countries abound in infinite numbers and varieties of animals, fowls, and fishes. The climate favors the drying and preserving of animal food, which

is thus prepared to sustain the inhabitants, when nature imprisons the material creation in chains of ice, and wraps herself up in her mantle of snow. Thus, if we survey the whole globe, the food, climate, and other circumstances will be found accommodated to the inhabitants; and they, as far as they conform to the organic laws, will be found adapted to their climate and mode of subsistence.

In all positions man finds himself called upon, by the clear indications of the organic laws, to take that free and cheerful exercise which is calculated to develop vigorous, muscular, nervous, and mental action. The labourer digs and the hunter chases for subsistence, but finds, at the same time, health and cheerfulness. The penalty of the violation of this organic law, by the indulgence of indolence, is debility, enfeebled action, both bodily and mental, dyspepsia with all its horrid train, and, finally, death. On the other hand, the penalty of over exertion, debauchery, intemperance, and excess of every species, comes in other forms of disease and suffering. These laws, though not so obviously and palpably so, are as invariable and inevitable as those of attraction or magnetism; and yet the great mass of our species, even in what we call enlightened and educated countries, do not recognise and obey them. It is in vain for them, that, from age to age, the same consequences have ensued, as the eternal heralds of the divinity, proclaiming to all people, in all languages, that his laws carry their sanctions with them. One of our most imperious duties, then, is to study these laws, to make ourselves conversant with their bearing upon our pursuit of happiness, that we may conform to them.

When we have become acquainted with their universality and resistless power, we shall indulge no puerile hope that we may enjoy the present gratification of infringing them, and then evade the ultimate consequences. We shall as soon calculate to change condition with the tenants of the air and the waters, as expect to divert any one of them from its onward course.

He, then, is wise who looks round him with a searching eye, to become fully possessed, without the colouring of sophistical wishes and self-deceiving expectation, of the actual conditions of his being; and who, instead of imagining that the unchangeable courses of nature will conform to him, his ignorance, interests, or passions, shapes his course so as to conform to them. He will no more expect, for example, that he can indulge his appetites, give scope to his passions, and yield himself to the seductions of life, and escape without a balance of misery in consequence, than he would calculate to throw himself, unhurt, from a mountain precipice.

So far as regards himself, he will study the organic laws, in reference to their bearing upon his mind, his health, his morals, his happiness. He will strive to be cheerful; for he knows that it is a part of the constitution of things, that cheerfulness tends to physical and mental health. He will accustom himself to exercise, and will avoid indolence, because he understands that he was formed to be an active being, and that he cannot yield to his slothful propensities without forfeiting the delightful feeling of energy, and the power to operate upon events, instead of being passively

borne along by them. He will be active, that he may feel conscious power. He will rise above the silent and invisible influence of sloth, and will exult in a feeling of force and self-command, for the same reasons that the eagle loves to soar aloft, and look upon the sun; because a sensation of power, and a sublime liberty are enjoyed in the flight. He will be temperate in the gratification of his appetites and passions, because he is aware, that every excessive indulgence strikes a balance of suffering against him, which he must discharge sooner or later; and helps to forge a chain of habit that will render it more difficult for him to resist the next temptation to indulgence. He will rise early from sleep, because nature calls him to early rising, in all her cheerful voices, in the matin song of birds, in the balmy morning freshness and elasticity of the air, and in the renovated cry of joy from the whole animal creation. He will do this, because he has early heard complaints from all sides of the shortness of life, and because he is sensible, that he who rises every day two hours before the common period, will prolong the ordinary duration of life by adding six years of the pleasantest part of existence. He will rise early, because next after the intemperate, no human being offers a more unworthy spectacle than is presented by the man who calls himself rational and immortal, who sees before him a greater amount of knowledge, duty, and happiness, than he could hope to compass in a thousand years; and who yet turns himself indolently from side to side, during the hours of the awakening of nature, enjoying only the luxury of a savage or a brute, in a state of dozing existence little superior to the

dreamless sleep of the grave. I judge the character of a youth of whom I wish to entertain hope, by this criterion. If he can nobly resist his propensities, if he can act from reason against his inclinations, if he can trample indolence under foot, if he can always make the effort to show the intellectual in the ascendant over the animal being, I note him as one, who will be worthy of eminence, whether he attain it or not.

In a word, there is something of dignity and intellectual grandeur in the aspect of the young, who live in obedience to the organic and moral laws, which commands at once that undefined, and almost unconscious estimation and respect, which all minds involuntarily pay to true greatness. Such was the image of the poet, when he delineated the angel *severe in youthful beauty*; and such that of the Mantuan, when he compares Neptune rebuking and hushing the winds, to a venerable man, allaying, by his words of peace, the uproar of an infuriated populace.

Were I to enter into details of your obligations to understand and obey these laws, as they relate to the various periods, pursuits, and duties of life, I should offer you a volume instead of an outline, which, from the examples given, your own thoughts can easily fill out. But that I may not leave these momentous duties wholly untouched, I shall dwell a moment on their bearing upon a most important epoch of life, one which, perhaps more than any other, gives the colour to future years either of happiness or misery.

When the young reach that period when nature invokes them to assume the obligations of connubial life, this knowledge and conformity will cause them to

pause, and reflect on what is before them, and will interdict them from following the inconsiderate throng in entering into that decisive condition, consulting no other lights than a morbid fancy, those impulses which are common to all other animals, or sordid calculations of interest. They are well apprized, that the declamations of satire, and the bitter and common jest of all civilized people, upon wedded life, have but too much foundation in truth. They perceive, at a glance, that those who with such views take on them the obligations of the conjugal state have no right to hope any thing better than satiety, ill-humour, monotonous disgust, and the insupportable imprisonment of two persons, in intimate and indissoluble partnership, who find weariness and penance in being together, who are reminded, at once by the void in their hearts, and their mutual inability to fill it, that they must not only endure the pain of being chained together, but feel, that they are thus barred from a happier union, partly by shame, partly by public opinion, and, more than all, by the obstacles wisely thrown by all civilized nations in the way of obtaining divorce. There can be no doubt, that the common views of the universal unhappiness of the wedded state in all Christian countries are the result of gross exaggeration. Making all allowances for errors from this source, language is too feeble to delineate the countless and unutterable miseries that in all time since the institution of marriage, as recognised by Christianity, have resulted from these incompatible unions, for the simple reason, that, in this transaction, of so much more moment than almost any other, scarcely one of the parties in a thousand, it is believed, takes the

least note of it in relation to the organic and moral laws. The young and the aged, the feeble and the strong, the healthy and the diseased, the beautiful and the deformed, the mild and the fierce, the intellectual and the purely animal, the rich and the poor, bring their incompatibilities to a common stock, add ruinous excesses of temperament together, unite under a spell, reckless of the live-long consequences involved, and arouse from a short trance to the conscious and sober sadness of waking misery. To them the hackneyed declamations against marriage have a terrible import. Weariness, discontent, ennui, relieved only by the fierceness of domestic discord, and a wretchedness aggravated by the consciousness that there is no escape from it, but by death, is the issue of a union consummated under illusive expectations of more than mortal happiness. How many millions have found this to be the reality of their youthful dreams! Yet if this most important union is contracted under animal impulses, without any regard to moral and intellectual considerations, without any investigation of the organic and social fitness of the case, without inquiry into the compatibility, without a mutual understanding of temperament, dispositions, and habits; who cannot foresee, that the propensities will soon languish in satiety; that repentance, and discord, and disgust, and disaffection, and loathing, in proportion to the remembered raptures for ever passed away, will rudely open the eyes of the parties to their real and permanent condition, and that by a law as certain and inevitable as that which propels water down a precipice! And this is not the darkest shade in the picture. By the same laws children are

born with the doubled excess of the temperaments of their parents; or puny, undeveloped, and feeble, or racked by all the fiercer passions of our nature. Opening their eyes in this scene, which the guilty thoughtlessness of successive generations has rendered little better than a vast lazaret house, evil example, gloom, unregulated tempers, repining, and misery are their first and last spectacles. They advance into life to repeat the errors of their parents, to make common stock of their misery anew, to multiply the number of the unhappy, or perhaps worse, to tenant hospitals, and the receptacles of human ignorance and misery.

Can any question be imagined in life, in regard to which you ought so deliberately to pause, investigate, and weigh all the bearings of the case? And yet can any other important transaction be named, upon which, in this view, so little thought is bestowed, and which is entered into with such reckless blindness to consequences? He, who determines to respect the laws of his being, will study his own temperament and that of the other party, and weigh the excesses and defects, as one convinced by the general analogy of animated nature, that the physical and mental character, the constitutional and moral temperament of the offspring, in the ordinary course of things, will be a compound of that of the parents. If he find himself subject to any peculiar corporeal infirmity, hereditary tendency to disease, overbearing propensities towards indulgence or excess, unbalanced passions, or morbid mental obliquity, he will be studiously solicitous that the other party shall not be labouring under similar disqualifications. I may not follow out the

subordinate details. Your thoughts cannot but suggest innumerable considerations that I pass in silence. Will any moral being, capable of conscientious views of the ultimate bearing of his actions, dare to treat this subject, all momentous as it is, with unphilosophic levity and ridicule? Will any one say, that such discussions ought to be pretermitted by a parent? I affirm, that such are not my notions of the obligations of decorum and propriety. The world has been too long peopled with mere animals bound by the laws, and doomed to the responsibilities of rationality, and yet acting like the orders below them, without a capacity for finding their happiness. If, being men, and inheriting either the privileges or the doom of men, we will choose to consider ourselves merely as animals, shall we dare to arraign Providence, or fill the world with murmurs, if we enjoy not the peculiar pleasures of either race, and are subject to the miseries of both? When you are aware that such considerations must affect not only your own happiness or misery, but that of your offspring, a whole coming generation, and the hopes of the regeneration and improvement of a world, you will be sensible that silence in such a discussion would be guilty pride. I perfectly coincide with the conclusions of Combe upon this subject, and transcribe for your benefit an admirable exposition of my views from the notes appended to his book on the *Constitution of Man.*

“It is a very common error, not only among philosophers, but among practical men, to imagine that the *feelings* of the mind are communicated to it through the medium of the *intellect*; and, in particular, that if

no indelicate objects reach the eyes, or expressions penetrate the ears, perfect purity will necessarily reign within the soul ; and, carrying this mistake into practice, they are prone to object to all discussion of the subjects treated of under the 'Organic Laws,' in works designed for general use. But their principle of reasoning is fallacious, and the practical result has been highly detrimental to society. The *feelings* have existence and activity distinct from the *intellect* ; they spur it on to obtain their own gratification ; and it may become either their slave or guide, according as it is enlightened concerning their constitution and objects, and the laws of nature to which they are subjected. The most profound philosophers have inculcated this doctrine ; and, by phrenological observation, it is demonstrably established. The organs of the feelings are distinct from those of the intellectual faculties ; they are larger ; and, as each faculty, *cæteris paribus*, acts with a power proportionate to the size of its organ, the feelings are obviously the active or impelling powers. The cerebellum, or organ of amativeness, is the largest of the whole mental organs ; and, being endowed with natural activity, it fills the mind spontaneously with emotions and suggestions which may be directed, controlled, and resisted, in outward manifestation, by intellect and moral sentiment, but which cannot be prevented from arising nor eradicated after they exist. The whole question, therefore, resolves itself into this, Whether it is most beneficial to enlighten and direct that feeling, or (under the influence of an error in philosophy, and false delicacy founded on it), to permit it to riot in all the fierceness of a

blind animal instinct, withdrawn from the eye of reason, but not thereby deprived of its vehemence and importunity. The former course appears to me to be the only one consistent with reason and morality ; and I have adopted it in reliance on the good sense of my readers, that they will at once discriminate between practical instruction concerning this feeling, addressed to the intellect, and lascivious representations addressed to the mere propensity itself ; with the latter of which the enemies of all improvement may attempt to confound my observations. Every function of the mind and body is instituted by the Creator ; all may be abused ; and it is impossible regularly to avoid abuse of them, except by being instructed in their nature, objects, and relations. This instruction ought to be addressed exclusively to the intellect ; and when it is so, it is science of the most beneficial description. The propriety, nay, necessity, of acting on this principle, becomes more and more apparent, when it is considered that the discussions of the text suggest only intellectual ideas to individuals in whom the feeling in question is naturally weak, and that such minds perceive no indelicacy in knowledge which is calculated to be useful ; while, on the other hand, persons in whom the feeling is naturally strong, are precisely those who stand in need of direction, and to whom, of all others, instruction is the most necessary."

No art in these days is better understood, by those who have found their interest in investigating the subject, than that of improving the races of the lower animals. Every species, upon which the effort has been made, has been found perfectly subservient to the

art. The desirable forms and qualities are selected, and the proper means of improvement applied. The wished result is not obtained to its full extent in the first generation ; but a uniform approximation commences ; and every successive amelioration brings the animal nearer to the requisite standard. The whole art is founded on observation of the organic laws of the races, and the general fact, that the instincts, qualities, temperament, form, and colour of the animals are hereditary and transmissible. These are truths so well known, that the grazier and the shepherd apply them constantly in rearing their domestic animals. Shall they be disregarded, when it becomes known, that they bear equally upon the improvement of man, *next in dignity to angels*? Shall these considerations rear a nobler race of animals, and, by overlooking them, shall man alone be consigned to degradation ?

---

## LETTER III.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

I PROCEED to examples and developments of the doctrine chiefly insisted upon in the former letter. I draw them chiefly from Mr. Combe, premising that they exactly coincide with views which you cannot but remember to have heard me advance, before I had read his book on *the constitution of man*. It is a law of

the animal creation, that not only the natural, but even the acquired qualities are transmitted by parents to their offspring; and man, as an organized being, is subject to laws similar to those which govern the organization of the lower animals. "Children," says Dr. Pritchard, "resemble in feature and constitution both parents; but, I think, more generally the father." Changes, produced by external causes, in the constitution and appearance of the individual, are temporary; and, in general, acquired characters are transient, terminating with the individual, and having no influence on the progeny. The mental development of the Circassian race is known to be of the highest order. The nobles of Persia are children of Circassian mothers, and they are remarkable in that country for their mental and corporeal superiority over the other classes. Every one acquainted with the condition of our southern slaves, well understands the obvious fact, that the mulattoes are much superior in quickness and capability of acquiring and retaining knowledge, to the negroes. The Indian half-breeds are remarkable for the immediate ascendancy which they acquire in their tribes over the full-blooded Indians. In oriental India, the intermarriages of the Hindoos with Europeans have produced an intermediate race, much superior to the natives, and destined, it is already predicted, to be the future sovereigns of India. In fact, physiology has deduced no conclusion more certain, than that, in ordinary cases, the temperament and intellect of the children are a compound of that of their parents. Of this I might produce innumerable instances from history, of the Alexanders, Cæsars, and Antonines, the distin-

guished great and wise of ancient and modern times ; and equally, in the opposite direction, in the Neros and Caligulas, the depraved and abandoned of all ages and countries, where observation has been able to trace their parentage.

One of the most fertile sources of human misery, then, arises from persons uniting in marriage, whose tempers, talents, and dispositions do not harmonize. If it be true that natural talents and dispositions are connected by the Creator with particular constitutions of the parents, it is obviously one of his institutions, that these constitutions should be most seriously taken into the calculation in forming a compact for life. The Creator having formed such ordinances in the unchangeable arrangements of nature, as to confer happiness, when they are discovered and observed, and misery, when they are unknown or unobserved, it is obviously our best wisdom to investigate and respect them. If individuals, after this truth reaches their conviction, should go on, in imitation of the common example, to form reckless connexions, which can only terminate in sorrow, it is obvious that they must do so either from contempt of the effects of this influence upon the happiness of domestic life, and a secret belief, that they may in some way evade its consequences, or from the predominance of avarice, or some other animal feeling, precluding them from yielding obedience to what they see to be an institution of the Creator.

At the first aspect of this subject, three alternatives are presented, one of which, it should seem, must have a determining power upon the offspring. Either, in

the first place, the corporeal and mental constitution, which the parents themselves inherit at birth, are transmitted so absolutely as that the children are exact copies of the parents, without variation or modification, sex following sex ; or, in the second place, the inherent qualities of the father and mother combine, and are transmitted in a modified form to the offspring ; or, thirdly, the qualities of the children are determined jointly by the constitution of the parents, and the faculties and temperaments which predominated in power and energy at the particular period when the organic existence of the child commenced.

If these views are correct, and if a man and woman, about to marry, have not only their own domestic happiness, but that of five or more human beings depending on their attention to considerations essentially the same as the foregoing, how differently ought this contract to be viewed from the common aspect which it presents to persons assuming its solemn stipulations ! Yet it is astonishing to what extent pecuniary and other minor considerations will induce men to investigate and observe the natural laws ; and how small an influence moral and rational considerations exert upon this most important of all earthly connexions.

I cannot forbear, under this head, quoting entire another passage from the author from whom I have substantially drawn many of the foregoing observations.

“ Rules, however, are best taught by examples ; and I shall, therefore, proceed to mention some facts that have fallen under my own notice, or been communicated to me from authentic sources, illustrative of the practical consequences of infringing the law of hereditary descent.

"A man, aged about fifty, possessed a brain in which the animal, moral, and knowing intellectual organs were all strong, but the reflecting weak. He was pious, but destitute of education; he married an unhealthy young woman, deficient in moral development, but of considerable force of character; and several children were born. The father and mother were far from being happy; and when the children attained to eighteen or twenty years of age, they were adepts in every species of immorality and profligacy; they picked their father's pockets, stole his goods, and got them sold back to him, by accomplices, for money, which was spent in betting and cock-fighting, drinking and low debauchery. The father was heavily grieved; but knowing only two resources, he beat the children severely, as long as he was able, and prayed for them; his words were, that '*if after that*, it pleased the Lord to make vessels of wrath of them, the Lord's will must just be done.' I mention this last observation, not in jest, but in great seriousness. It was impossible not to pity the unhappy father; yet who that sees the institutions of the Creator to be in themselves wise, but in this instance to have been directly violated, will not acknowledge that the bitter pangs of the poor old man were the consequences of his own ignorance; and that it was an erroneous view of the divine administration, which led him to overlook his own mistakes, and to attribute to the Almighty the purpose of making vessels of wrath of his children, as the only explanation which he could give of their wicked dispositions. Who that sees the cause of his misery must not lament that his piety should not have been

enlightened by philosophy, and directed to obedience, in the first instance, to the organic institutions of the Creator, as one of the prescribed conditions, without observance of which he had no title to expect a blessing upon his offspring.

“In another instance, a man, in whom the animal organs, particularly those of combativeness and destructiveness, were very large, but with a pretty fair moral and intellectual development, married, against her inclination, a young woman, fashionably and showily educated, but with a very decided deficiency in conscientiousness. They soon became unhappy, and even blows were said to have passed between them, although they belonged to the middle rank of life. The mother, in this case, employed the children to deceive and plunder the father, and, latterly, spent the produce in drink. The sons inherited the deficient morality of the mother, and the ill temper of the father. The family fire-side became a theatre of war, and, before the sons attained a majority, the father was glad to get them removed from his house, as the only means by which he could feel even his life in safety from their violence; for they had by that time retaliated the blows with which he had visited them in their younger years; and he stated, that he actually considered his life to be in danger from his own offspring.

“In another family, the mother possesses an excellent development of the moral and intellectual organs, while, in the father, the animal organs predominate in great excess. She has been the unhappy victim of ceaseless misfortune, originating from the misconduct of her husband. Some of the children have inherited

the father's brain, and some the mother's ; and of the sons whose heads resembled the father's, several have died through mere debauchery and profligacy, under thirty years of age ; whereas, those who resemble the mother, are alive, and little contaminated, even amidst all the disadvantages of evil example.

“ On the other hand, I am not acquainted with a single instance in which the moral and intellectual organs predominated in size, in both father and mother, and whose external circumstances also permitted their general activity, in which the *whole* children did not partake of a moral and intellectual character, differing slightly in degrees of excellence one from another, but all presenting the decided predominance of the human over the animal faculties.

“ There are well-known examples of the children of religious and moral fathers, exhibiting dispositions of a very inferior description ; but in all of these instances that I have been able to observe, there has been a large development of the animal organs in the one parent, which was just controlled, but not much more, by the moral and intellectual powers ; and in the other parent, the *moral* organs did not appear to be in large proportion. The unfortunate child inherited the large animal development of the one, with the defective moral development of the other ; and in this way was inferior to both. The way to satisfy one's self on this point, is to examine the heads of the parents. In all such cases, a large base of the brain, which is the region of the animal propensities, will very probably be found in one or other of them.

“ Another organic law of the animal kingdom deserves attention, viz. that by which marriages betwixt

blood relations, tend decidedly to the deterioration of the physical and mental qualities of the offspring. In Spain, kings marry their nieces; and in this country, first and second cousins marry without scruple; although every philosophical physiologist will declare that this is in direct opposition to the institutions of nature. This law holds also in the vegetable kingdom. ‘A provision, of a very simple kind, is, in some cases, made to prevent the male and female blossoms of the same plant from breeding together, this being found to hurt the breed of vegetables, just as breeding in-and-in does the breed of animals. It is contrived, that the dust shall be shed by the male blossom before the female is ready to be affected by it, so that the impregnation must be performed by the dust of some other plant, and in this way the breed be crossed.’”

Such considerations, I hope, will induce you to exercise cautious examination of this subject, if either of you should ever be placed in circumstances to contemplate assuming the duties of the wedded life. If you do not, you will have cast the pursuit of happiness upon the die of chance at the very outset of your career. Allow me, before I dismiss the book, from which I have already so liberally quoted, to extract one passage more, touching the application of the natural laws to the practical arrangements of life.

“If a system of living and occupation were to be framed for human beings, founded on the exposition of their nature, which I have now given, it would be something like this.

“1st. So many hours a day would require to be dedicated by every individual in health, to the exercise

of his nervous and muscular systems, in labour calculated to give scope to these functions. The reward of obeying this requisite of his nature, would be health, and a joyous animal existence ; the punishment of neglect is disease, low spirits, and death.

“2dly. So many hours a day should be spent in the sedulous employment of the knowing and reflecting faculties ; in studying the qualities of external objects, and their relations ; also the nature of all animated beings, and their relations ; not with the view of accumulating mere abstract and barren knowledge, but of enjoying the positive pleasure of mental activity, and of turning every discovery to account, as a means of increasing happiness, or alleviating misery. The leading object should always be to find out the relationship of every object to our own nature, organic, animal, moral, and intellectual, and to keep that relationship habitually in mind, so as to render our acquirements directly gratifying to our various faculties. The reward of this conduct would be an incalculably great increase of pleasure, in the very act of acquiring knowledge of the real properties of external objects, together with a great accession of power in reaping ulterior advantages, and in avoiding disagreeable affections.

“3dly. So many hours a day ought to be devoted to the cultivation and gratification of our moral sentiments ; that is to say, in exercising these in harmony with intellect, and especially in acquiring the habit of admiring, loving, and yielding obedience to the Creator and his institutions. This last object is of vast importance. Intellect is barren of practical fruit, however rich it may be in knowledge, until it is fired and

prompted to act by moral sentiment. In my view, knowledge by itself is comparatively worthless and impotent, compared with what it becomes when vivified by elevated emotions. It is not enough that intellect is informed; the moral faculties must simultaneously co-operate; yielding obedience to the precepts which the intellect recognises to be true. One way of cultivating the sentiments would be for men to meet and act together, on the fixed principles which I am now endeavouring to unfold, and to exercise on each other in mutual instruction, and in united adoration of the great and glorious Creator, the several faculties of benevolence, veneration, hope, ideality, wonder, and justice. The reward of acting in this manner would be a communication of direct and intense pleasure to each other; for I refer to every individual who has ever had the good fortune to pass a day or an hour with a really benevolent, pious, honest, and intellectual man, whose soul swelled with adoration of his Creator, whose intellect was replenished with knowledge of his works, and whose whole mind was instinct with sympathy for human happiness, whether such a day did not afford him the most pure, elevated, and lasting gratification he ever enjoyed. Such an exercise, besides, would invigorate the whole moral and intellectual powers, and fit them to discover and obey the divine institutions."

You will study and obey the moral laws of the universe, of which you are a part, because you are moral beings, and because obedience to these laws constitutes the tie of affinity between you, the higher orders of being, and the divinity. You will respect them, because

it is the glory of your nature, that you alone, of all creatures below, are morally subject to them. Laying out of the question their momentous sanctions in the eternal future, you must be aware that the Creator has annexed pleasure to obeying them, and pain to their violation as inevitably as gravity belongs to matter. One would think it must be enough to determine the conduct of a being who laid claim to the character of rational, to know, that no art nor dexterity, that no repentance nor return to obedience, can avert the consequences of a single violation of these laws; and that no imaginable present good can counterbalance the future misery, that must accrue in consequence.

In regard, for example, to the practice of the most common and every day duties, who can doubt the truth of the trite adage, *Honesty is the best policy?* This is, in effect, no more than saying, that the moral laws of the universe are constituted upon such principles, as to make it every man's interest to obey them. It is as certain that they are so constituted, as that fire will burn or water drown you; and when you understand this constitution, it marks the same want of a sane mind to violate them, as to be unable to keep out of these elements. Yet the greater portion of the species do not constantly act upon a full belief in this hackneyed maxim. They think, apparently, that they can in some way obtain the imagined advantage of dishonesty and evade the connected evil, not aware that detection and diminished confidence may be avoided for once or twice; but not the loss of self-respect, the pureness and integrity of internal principle, the certainty of forging the first link in a chain of bad habits, and a

thousand painful consequences, which it would be easy to enumerate in detail. Almost every one deems that he may safely put forth every day false compliment, double-dealing, deception on a small scale, and little frauds, not cognisable by any law or code of honour. In a word, if actions are a test of the sincerity of conviction, very few really are convinced that *honesty is the best policy*.

We hold the man insane who should leap from a high building upon the pavement, or attempt to grapple with the blind power of the elements. But it is scarcely the subject of our remark, that the multitude about us, in the most important, as well as the minute concerns of life, live in habitual recklessness or violation of the organic and moral laws; and yet we certainly know, that whoever infringes them is as sure to pay the penalty as he who madly places himself in opposition to the material laws. I can never present this astonishing and universal blindness in too many forms of repetition, if the effect is to bring you to view these two species of folly in the same light.

The reason clearly is, that in too many instances, men take no pains to acquaint themselves with these laws, and their bearing upon the constitution of man; or, deceived by the clamors of the inclinations, and the illusions of present pleasure and advantage, when balanced with future and remote penalties, they commit the infractions, and hope, that between the certain pleasure and the distant and contingent pain, they can interpose some evasion, and sever the consequences from the fault. The expectation always ends, like the alchymist's dream, and the projector's perpetual motion.

Even in the apprehension of the consequences, the mind is paying the penalty of an unquiet conscience, and of an abatement of self-confidence, and self-respect; penalties which very few earthly pleasures can compensate.

When I speak of these unchangeable laws, as emanations from the divine wisdom and goodness, as transcripts of the divine immutability, and as being the best of all possible arrangements, not to be superseded or turned from their course by the wisest of beings, you will not understand me to bear upon the consoling and scriptural doctrine of providence. I firmly believe and trust in it; not, however, in the popular view. It would not increase my veneration for the Almighty, to suppose that his laws required exceptions and variations, to meet particular cases; nor that they would call for frequent suspensions and changes to provide for contingencies not foreseen at the commencement of the mighty movements. Such are not the grounds of my trust in the wisdom and goodness of the Supreme Being. I neither desire nor expect any deviation of laws, as wise and good as they can be, in their general operation, to meet my particular wishes, or those of the friends most dear to me. I expect that none of the powers of nature will change for me; I encourage no insane hopes that things will forego their tendencies to meet my conveniences or pleasures. Prayer is a duty equally comforting and elevating; but my prayers are not that these fixed laws of the divine wisdom may change for me, but that I may understand and conform to them. The providence in which I believe supposes no exceptions, infringements, or vio-

lations of the universal plan of the divine government. Miracles only seem such to us, because we see but a link or two in the endless chain of that plan. An ingenious mechanician constructs a clock, which will run many years, and only once in the whole period strike an alarm bell. It is a miracle to those who comprehend not that it was part of the original plan of the mechanician. May we not with more probability adopt the same reasoning, in relation to the recorded miracles, as parts of the original plan of the Eternal?

Piety, established upon a knowledge of these laws, and a respect for them, and associated with veneration for their author, is rational, consistent, firm, and manly. It seeks, it expects nothing in the puerile presumption, that the ordinances of a code, fitted for the whole system of the Creator, will be wrested to the wants of an insect. In docility and meekness it labors for conformity to those ordinances; in other words, to the divine will. It violates no principle, and calls for the exercise of no faith that is repugnant to the dictates of common sense and the teaching of common observation. Piety, founded on such views, abides the scrutiny of the severest investigation. No vacillation of the mind from varying fortunes, no questionings of unbelief, doubt, and despair, can shake it. It rests firmly on the basis of the divine attributes. It holds fast to the golden chain, the last link of which is rivetted to the throne of the Eternal.

Thus it seems to me indispensable, as a prerequisite to the pursuit of happiness, that the inquirer should hold large discourse with the physical, organic, and moral laws; that he should carefully investigate their

whole bearing upon his constitution; that he should trace all their influences on him from the first hour in which he opens his eyes on the light to his departure out of life. I insist the more earnestly upon this, because in these days the study of the moral relations of things seems to me comparatively abandoned. The exact and natural sciences are studied, rather, it would seem, as an end, than a means. Natural philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy may be highly useful; but who will compare these sciences, in regard to their utility and importance, with those which guide the mind to their author, which teach the knowledge of his moral laws, which instruct us how to allay the passions, to moderate our expectations, and to establish morality on the basis of our regard to our own happiness?

If, then, you would give yourself to the patient study of the natural sciences, that you may gain reputation and the ability to be useful, much more earnestly will you study regimen, exercise, temperance, moderation, cheerfulness, the benefits of a balanced mind, and of a wise and philosophic conformity to an order of things, not a tittle of which you can change, that you may be resigned, useful, and happy. All knowledge, which cannot be turned to this account, either as relates to yourselves or others, is useless.

Innumerable counsels, in relation to your habits, your pleasures, and pursuits, your studies, your tastes and modes of conduct, your *beau ideal* of natural and moral beauty, your standard of dignity and worth of character, press upon my mind, and all in some way connected with the views which I have just taken. But I shall be able to present such of them as I may deem

worthy to find a place in these letters, perhaps with most propriety and effect, as suggested in the form of notes\* appended to the chapters of the essay of M. Droz, a paraphrase of which I now offer you.

---

## LETTER IV.

### GENERAL VIEWS OF THE SUBJECT.

MAN is created to be happy.<sup>1</sup> His desires and the wisdom of the Creator concur to prove the assertion. Yet the earth resounds with the complaints of the unhappy, although they are encompassed with the means of enjoyment, of which they appear to know neither the value nor the use. They resemble the shipwrecked mariner, on a desert isle, surrounded with fruits, of the flavors and properties of which he is ignorant, as he is doubtful whether they offer aliment or poison.

I was early impelled to investigate the character and motives of the crowd around me, eagerly rushing forward in pursuit of happiness. I soon noted multitudes relinquishing the chase in indolent despondency. They affirmed to me that they no longer believed in the existence of happiness. I felt an insatiate craving, and saw life through the illusive colouring of youth. Unwilling to resign my hopes, I inquired of others, who seemed possessed of greater strength of mind, and more weight of character, if they could guide me to the place of happiness? Some answered with an ill-concealed

\* These *Notes* will be found at the end of the volume. The small figures in the text refer to them.

smile of derision, and others with bitterness. They declared that, in their view, the pleasures of life were more than counterbalanced by its pains. Because they were disappointed and discouraged, they deemed that their superior wisdom had enabled them to strip off the disguises of life, and contemplate it with sullen resignation.

I remarked others in high places, whose restless activity and brilliance dazzled the multitude and inspired envy. I eagerly asked of them the secret of happiness. Too proud and self-satisfied to dissemble, they made little effort to conceal their principles. I saw their hearts contracted by the vileness of egotism, and devoured with measureless ambition. A faithful scrutiny, which penetrated beyond their dazzling exterior, showed me the righteous reaction of their principles, and convinced me that they suffered according to their deserts.

Weary and disheartened, I left them, and repaired to the class of stern and austere moralists. They represented the world to me as a melancholy and mysterious valley, through which the sojourner passes, groaning on his way to the grave. Their doctrines inspired me at once with sadness and terror. I soon resumed the elastic confidence of youth, and replied, "I will never believe that the Author of my being, who has imaged in my heart such pure and tranquil pleasures, who has rendered man capable of chaste love, and of friendship in its sanctity, who has formed us innocent before we could practise virtue, and who has connected the salutary bitterness of repentance with errors, has unalterably willed our misery."

Thence I passed to the opposite extreme, and accosted a gay and reckless throng, whose deportment showed that they had found the object of my pursuit. I discovered them to be fickle by character, and vacillating from indifference. They had only escaped the errors of the moralists, by substituting, in place of their austere maxims, enjoyments without any regard to consequences. I asked them to point me to happiness. Without comprehending the import of my question, they offered me participation in their pleasures. But I saw them prodigal of life, dissipating years in a few days, and reserving the remnant of their existence for unavailing *répentance*.<sup>2</sup>

In view of so many observations, I abandoned the idea of guiding my researches by the counsels of others, and began to inquire for the secret in my own bosom. I heard the multitude around me complaining in disappointment and discouragement. I resolved, that I would not commence the pursuit of happiness by servilely following in their beaten path. I determined to reflect, and patiently investigate a subject of so much moment. I detected at once the error of the common impression, that pleasure and happiness are the same. The former, fickle and fleeting, assumes forms as various as human caprice, and its most attractive charm is novelty. The object which gives it birth to-day, ceases to please, or inspires disgust to-morrow. The perception of happiness is not thus changeable and transient. It creates the consciousness of an existence so tranquil and satisfying, that the longer we experience it, the more we desire to prolong its duration.

Another mistaken, though common impression is,

that the more profoundly we reflect, and make the pursuit of happiness a study, the less we shall be likely to enjoy. This is an error not only in regard to happiness, but even pleasure. If it be innocent and exempt from danger, to analyze it, and reason upon it, so far from diminishing, prolongs the delight, and renders it higher. Without reflection we only skim its surface; we do not penetrate, and enjoy it.

Let us observe the few who have acquired the wisdom to enjoy that existence which the multitude waste. In their festal unions of friendship, let us mark the development of their desire to multiply the happy moments of life. By what ingenious and pleasant discussions do they heighten the charms of their condition! With what delicacy of tact do they analyze their enjoyments, to taste them with a more prolonged and exquisite relish! With what skill do they discipline themselves sometimes to efface the images of the future, that nothing may embitter or distract their relish of the present; and sometimes to invoke remembrances and hopes, to impart to it still brighter embellishments!

Contrary to the prevalent impression, I therefore deem that, to reflect much upon it, is one of the wisest means in the pursuit of happiness. The first analysis of reflection, it is true, dispels the charm with which youth invests existence. It forces the conviction upon us, that the pleasures of life are less durable, and its forms more numerous and prolonged than we had anticipated. The first result of the process is discouragement. But, as we continue to reflect, objects change their aspect a second time. The evils which at the

first glance seemed so formidable, lose a portion of their terrific semblance; and the fleeting pleasures of existence receive new attractions from their analogy to human weakness.

They mistake, too, who suppose that the art on which I write has never been taught. The sages of Greece investigated the science of happiness as eloquently and profoundly as they studied the other sciences. They wisely held the latter in estimation only so far as they were subservient to the former. In all succeeding ages there have arisen a few thinking men, who have regarded all their faculties, their advantages of nature and fortune, their studies and acquirements, not as ends in themselves, but as means conducive to the right pursuit of happiness.

So long a period has elapsed since this has been a subject of investigation, that when the opinion is advanced that this pursuit may be successfully conducted by system, its rules reduced to an art, and thus become assimilated to those of the other arts, most men are utterly incredulous.<sup>3</sup> No truth, however, is more simple. To attain to a knowledge of the rules, it is only requisite, as in the other arts, that there should be natural dispositions for the study, favourable circumstances, and an assiduous investigation of the precepts.

The influence of fortunate dispositions for this study is chiefly discernible in men of marked and energetic character. Some are endowed by nature with such firmness and force of character, that misfortune cannot shake them. It slides, if I may so speak, over the surface of their stoical hearts, and the shock of adversity

inspires them almost with a sort of pleasure, calling forth the conscious feeling of power and independence for resistance. But we observe the greater number shrinking from affliction, and even images of sadness, enjoying the present without apparent consciousness, and forgetting the past without regret. Always fickle and frivolous, they evade suffering by recklessness and gaiety. The most perfect organization for happiness\* imparts at the same time great force to resist the pains of life, and keen sensibility to enjoy its pleasures. I am aware that great energy and quick sensibility are generally supposed to be incompatible qualities; I have, nevertheless, often seen them united. I would lay down precepts by which to obtain the combination. By a more perfect education, it is hoped that, in the ages to come, this union may become general.

Perhaps some will ask, if he who thus assumes to teach the art of happiness has himself learned to be constantly happy? Endowed with a moderate share of philosophy, and aided by favourable circumstances, I have thus far found the pleasures of life greatly over-balancing its pains. But who can hope felicity without alloy; I would not conceal that I have had my share of inquietudes and regrets; and I have sometimes forgotten my principles. I resemble the pilot who gives lessons upon his art after more than one shipwreck.<sup>5</sup>

## LETTER V.

## OUR DESIRES.

WHENCE are our most common sufferings? From desires which surpass our ability to satisfy them. The ancients relate, that Oromazes appeared to Usbeck, the virtuous, and said, "Form a wish, and I will grant it." "Source of light," replied the sage, "I only wish to limit my desires by those things which nature has rendered indispensable."<sup>16</sup>

Let us not suppose, however, that a negative happiness, a condition exempt from suffering, is the most fortunate condition to which we may aspire. They who contend for this gloomy system, have but poorly studied the nature of man. If he errs in desiring positive enjoyments, if his highest aim ought to be to live free from pain, the caves of the forest conceal those happy beings whom we ought to choose for our models.

Bounded by the present, animals sleep, eat, procreate, live without inquietude, and die without regret: and this is the perfection of negative happiness. Man, it is true, loses himself in vain projects. His long remembrances, his keen foresight create him suffering in the past and in the future. His imagination brings forth errors, his liberty crimes. But the abuse of his faculties does not disprove their excellence. Let him consecrate to directing them aright, that time which he has hitherto lost in mourning over their aberrations, and he will have reason to be grateful to the

Creator, for having given him the most exalted rank among sublunary beings. If, on the other hand, he chooses to abandon that rank, of which he ought to be proud, he will degrade his immortal nature at his own cost ; and will only add to his other evils the shame of wishing to render himself vile.

Let us examine those animals, the instincts of which have the nearest relation to intelligence. Not one of them takes possession of the paternal heritage, increases it, and transmits it to posterity. Man alone does this, improves his condition and his kind, and in this is essentially distinct from all other beings below. From the Eternal to him, and from him to animals, the chain is twice broken.

For man the absence of suffering and a negative happiness are not sufficient. His noble faculties refuse the repose of indifference. Created to aspire to whatever may be an element of enjoyment, let him cherish his desires, and let them indicate to him the path of happiness ; too fortunate, if they do not entice him towards objects which retire in proportion as he struggles to attain them, and towards those imaginary joys, of which the deceitful possession is more fertile in regrets than in pleasures.

Far from being the austere censor of desires, I admit, that they often produce charming illusions. What loveliness have they not spread over our spring of life ! Our imagination at that time, as brilliant and as vivid as our age, embellished the whole universe, and every position in which our lot might one day place us. We were occupied with errors ; but they were happy errors ; and to desire was to enjoy.

Those enchanting dreams, which hold such a delightful place in the life of every man, whose imagination is gay and creative, spring from our desires. Ingenious fictions ! Prolific visions ! While ye cradle us, we possess the object of our magic reveries. Real possession may be less fugitive. But may it not also vanish like a dream ?

Doubtless there are dangers blended with these seductive imaginings. In leaving the region of illusion, the greater part of men look with regret upon the abodes of reality in which they must henceforward dwell. Let us not share their gloomy weakness. Let us learn to enjoy the moments of error, and perpetuate and renew them by remembrance. Children only are allowed to weep when the waking moment dispels the toys of which a dream had given them possession.

We give ourselves up to illusions without danger if we have formed our reason ; if we wisely think that the situation where our lot has placed us may have advantages which no other could offer. Imagination embellishes some hours without troubling any. Prompt to yield to the delightful visions, there are few of which I have not contemplated the charm. In seeing them vanish like a fleeting dream, I look round on my wife and children, and believe that I am remembered by a few friends. I open my heart to the pleasures of my retreat, which, though simple, are ever new. As the gilded creations of imagination disappear, I smile at my creative occupation, and console myself with the consciousness, that fancy can paint nothing brighter or more satisfying than these my realities.<sup>7</sup>

But let me hasten to make an important distinction, to prevent the semblance of contradiction. Let me discriminate those fleeting desires, which amuse or delude us for a moment, from those deep cravings which, directing all our faculties towards a given end, necessarily exercise a strong influence upon life. It is time to contemplate the latter, and to suggest more grave reflections. While the scope of our faculties is limited to narrow bounds, our desires run out into infinity. From this fact result two reflections—the one afflicting, that the multitude are miserable, because it is easier to form than to obtain our wishes; the other consoling, that they might be happy, since every one can regulate his desires.

Reduced to the necessity to realize or restrain them, which course does wisdom indicate? Will ambition conduct us to repose?<sup>8</sup> He who chases its phantoms, resembles the child who imagines that he shall be able to grasp the rainbow, which spans the mountain in the distance: but from mountain to mountain a new horizon spreads before his eyes. But the courage and perseverance requisite to regulate our desires may intimidate us. We vex ourselves in the pursuit of fortune, honour, and glory. Philosophy is worth more than the whole, and do we expect to purchase it without pain? True, she declares to us, that to realize our desires is a part of the science of happiness; but by no means the most important one. Yet it is the only one to which most men devote themselves. Philosophy should teach us what desires we ought to receive and cherish as inmates. When they are fleeting and spring from a gay and creative imagination, let us

yield ourselves without fear to their transient dreams. But when they may exercise a long and decisive influence, let a mature examination teach us whether wisdom allows the attempt to realize them. Oh ! how much uncertainty and torment we might spare our weakness, if from infancy we directed our pursuit towards the essential objects of felicity, and if we stripped those which, in their issue, produce chimerical hopes and bitter regrets of their deceitful charms ! What gratitude should we not owe that provident instruction whose cares should indicate and smooth our road to happiness ! The great results which might be obtained from education, would be, to moderate the desires and to find some indemnities for the sorrows of life. On the present plan, by arousing our emulation, by enkindling our instinctive ardour to increase our fortune and eclipse our rivals, we make it a study, if I may so say, to render ourselves discontented with our destiny ; and, as if afraid that we should not be sufficiently perverted by the contagion of example, we invoke ambition and cupidity to enter the soul. We treat as chimerical those desires which are so simple and pure as to be pleasures of themselves, and which look to a happiness easy of attainment.

Let us, then, unlearn most of the ideas we have received. Let us close our eyes on the illusions which surround us. Let us remould our plan of life, and retain in the heart only those desires which nature has placed there. Let reflection impart energy to our mind, and be our guide in the new path which reason opens before us.

We shall be told that these desires animate us un-

sought and continually. I admit it. But in most men they are the simple result of instinct, and are vague and without decisive effect. A craving for happiness is diffused as widely as life. The enlightened desire of happiness is as rare as wisdom. The mass of our species do not avail themselves of life to enjoy it; but apparently for other purposes. My first and fundamental maxim is, that no one should live by chance. Enfranchised from vulgar ideas, and guided by the principles of true wisdom, let happiness be our end; and let us view all our employments and pursuits as means.

I meet men of sanguine temperament, who say in the pride of internal energy, "My calculations must succeed. I am certain to acquire wealth." Another of the same class assures me, that he sees no turn to his rapid career of advancement; and that he is confident of reaching the summit of greatness. What more fortunate result can he propose than happiness? My pupil should make all his plans subservient to the numbering of happy days even from the commencement of his career.<sup>9</sup>

Let us beware, however, of aspiring after a perfect felicity. The art I discuss will not descend from heaven. Its object is, to indicate desirable situations, to guide us towards them when they offer, and to remove the vexations of life. The greater part of mankind might exist in comfort. They fail of this in aiming at impracticable amelioration of their condition. It is an egregious folly only to contemplate the dark side of our case. I deem it a mark of wisdom and strength of mind, rather to exaggerate its advantages.

Let us carefully ascertain what things are indispensable to our well-being ; and let us discipline all our desires towards the acquisition of them. If I consult those who are driven onward by the whirlwind of life, to learn what objects are absolutely necessary to my end, what a long catalogue they will name ! If I ask moralists, how many sacrifices, incompatible with human nature, will they impose ! Agitated and uncertain, I am conscious that my powers are equally insufficient to amass all which the former prescribe, or to tear me from all which the latter disdainfully interdict.

In examining this all important subject, without the spirit of system, I realize that the essentials of a happy life are tranquillity of mind, independence, health, competence, and the affection of some of our equals. Let us strive to acquire them. They are numerous, I admit, and difficult to unite in the possession of an individual. Nevertheless, if a severe discrimination enabled us to bound our pursuit by the desire of obtaining only these objects, what a great and happy change would be effected upon the earth ; and how many disappointments would be henceforward unknown !<sup>10</sup>

---

## LETTER VI.

## TRANQUILLITY OF MIND.

By the word tranquillity I designate that state of the mind in which, estranged from the weaknesses of life, it tastes that happy calm which it owes to its own power and elevation. Inaccessible to storms, it still admits those emotions which give birth to pure pleasures, and yields to the generous movements which the virtues inspire. Tranquillity seems indifference only in the eyes of the vulgar. A delightful consciousness of existence accompanies it. We may meditate with a just pride upon the causes which produce it. Without reasoning we respire and enjoy it. It is the appropriate pleasure of the sage.

A pure conscience is the profoundest source of this delightful calm. Without it, we shall attempt in vain to veil our faults from ourselves, or to listen only to the voice of adulation. An interior witness must testify that we have sometimes sought occasions to be useful; and that we have always welcomed those who offered us opportunities to do good.

Another condition equally necessary is to close the heart against unregulated ambition. I am well aware, in laying down this precept, that I shall be deemed an idle dreamer. If you are convinced beyond argument, that there is nothing worth seeking in life but distinctions and honours, you may close my book. If you are ready to receive these brilliant illusions when they

come unsought, and return to the repose of your heart should you obtain them not, you may pursue the reading of my lessons.

Do not fear that I am about to announce trite truths touching the vices which ambition brings in its train, and the shameful actions and base measures by which it proposes to elevate its aspirant. Why should I declaim in common-place against ambition, when I have truths to offer so pressing, simple, and self-evident?

To consecrate to true enjoyment as many days as possible, to lose in disquieting desires as few moments as we may, these are the elements of my philosophy. The world, on the other hand, incessantly repeats, "Shine—ascend high places—bind fortune to your chariot wheels;" the multitude listen, and consume life in tormenting desires which end in disappointment. I say to my disciple, make your pursuit, whatever it be, a source of present enjoyment, and be happy without delay. But the cry of objection reaches me, "Would you wish him to vegetate in obscurity, and never transcend the limits of the narrow circle in which he was born?" I would have him enjoy the self-respect of conscious usefulness, and taste all the innocent pleasures of the senses, the heart, mind, and understanding. Farther than these, I see nothing but the miserable inquietudes of vanity. I admit that the pleasures of gratified ambition are high-flavoured and intoxicating; but, compelled to choose among enjoyments which cannot all be tasted together, I balance the delights which they spread over life with the pains which it must cost to obtain them. If I incline

to ambition, I must fly privacy and my retreat, and renounce the pleasures which my family, friends, and free pursuits daily renew. I must no longer inhabit the paradise of my pleasant dreams. Abandoning the simple and sincere enjoyments of obscurity, I abandon repose and independence.

Suppose I obtain those honours of which the distant brilliancy dazzles my vision, what destiny can I propose to myself? How long can I enjoy my honours? Besieged by incessant alarm, through fear of losing them, how often shall I sigh over the ill-judged exchange by which I bartered peace and privacy for them? Number all the truly happy days of the ambitious—they are those in which, forming his projects, and, in his imagination, removing the obstacles that lie in his way, he embellishes his career with the illusions of his fancy. Too often the desired objects, which in the distance glittered in his eyes, resemble those paintings which, seen from afar, present enchanting scenery, but offer only revolting views when beheld close at hand.

I wish to avoid the usual exaggeration upon these subjects. Moralists deceive us when, painting the contrast between the virtues and the vices, they assign unmixed felicity to the one, and absolute misery to the other. I am sensible that, even in his deepest inquietudes, and notwithstanding his desires and regrets, the votary of ambition still has his moments of intoxicating pleasure. It is not this alone, but happiness we seek. If we wish only to toil up the heights of ambition to enjoy the dignities of the summit, counsels are useless. If we ask for nothing more than

pleasures, they may be varied to infinity, and be found pervading all situations in forms appropriate to all characters. This hypocrite, that victim of envy, yonder miser, do they experience, the moralist will ask, nothing but torment? Mark the misanthrope who incessantly repeats that in a world peopled with perverse beings and malign spirits, existence is an odious burden. This man, notwithstanding, finds his pleasures in a world which he affects so to detest. Every invective which he throws out against it, is a eulogy reflected back upon himself. He rises in his own estimation in proportion as he debases others, and finds in himself all the qualities which he makes them want. Does he meet with a partizan of his principles? how delightful for two misanthropes to communicate their discoveries, and to make a joint war of sarcasm upon the human race! Does he find an antagonist? he experiences a charm in controverting him. Besides, as in vilifying human nature, no one can want either facts or arguments to present it in hues sufficiently dark, in the complacency of conscious triumph, he terminates his war of words.

The votary of ambition not only has pleasures which are often dazzling, but perhaps enjoyments not within the ordinary ken, which require profound observation. The ardent aspiration after success gives a charm to efforts in the struggle which would otherwise present only unmixed bitterness. Acts in themselves vile, ridiculous, or revolting, contemplated as means essential to a proposed end, lose their meanness and tendency to lessen self-respect. It is possible, in this view, that even extraordinary humiliations may inspire

the ambitious with a sort of pride, in the consciousness that he has strength to stoop to them for his purposes. In fine, it is too true that pleasure may be found in the most capricious aberrations, the most shameful vices, and the most atrocious crimes.

It will be seen that I abandon most of the trite declamation against ambition. I touch not on its long inquietudes, its inevitable torments, exacerbated a hundred fold if their victim preserve degrees of mental elevation and remains of moral sentiment. Life passes pleasantly among men who have just views, upright hearts, and frank manners, the true elements of greatness and enjoyment. Surrounded by such minds, we respire, as it were, a free and an empyrean atmosphere. Yield yourself to the empire of ambition, and in all countries, and in all time, you condemn yourself to live surrounded by greedy, unquiet, false, and vindictive intriguers, gnashing their teeth at all success in which they had no agency. All that encircle you unite insolence and baseness.

Those who envy authority and office are worthy of commiseration. Men in power are happy, they think. They have but to wish, and it is accomplished. The epitaph of the Swedish minister is sublime, and the index of a great truth. He had run the career of power and fortune with success. When near the period of his death, he ordered this inscription for his tomb: *Tandem felix. At last I am happy.*

We never leave the society of the great as we entered it. We have become either better or more perverse. Inexperience is easily dazzled with the superficial splendour. For a man of disciplined mind and

a character of energy, it is the most useful of schools. Here he tests and confirms his principles. Here he observes, sometimes with terror, sometimes with disgust, the melancholy results of the seductive passions. He here sees those who seem to have reached all their aims enjoying the repose of happy privacy. I anticipate the objection, "that this is all absurdity; that not one will be so convinced of his misery as to resign his power and descend from his elevation to that obscurity for which he sighs." I believe it; and I see in this a deeper shade in his misery. He has so long experienced the pernicious excitement of this splendid torment, that he can no longer exist in repose.

Such is the lot of erring humanity, that the world naturally associates glory and happiness with ambition, and sees not that the association is formed by our own mental feebleness. To rise above vulgar errors and the common train of thinking, to form sage principles, and, still more, to have the courage and decision to follow them, this is the proof of real force of character. But, to feel the need of dazzling the vulgar, to be willing to creep in order to rise, to struggle and dispute for trinkets, this is the common standard by which the multitude estimate a great mind.

Philosophers are accused of having presented grandeur under an unfavourable aspect, in order to console themselves for not having enjoyed it. History reads us another lesson. Aristotle instructed the son of Philip. Plato was received at the courts of kings. Cicero received the title of "father of his country" by a decree of the senate. Boethius, thrice clad with the consular purple, when his locks were hoary, was

dragged to a dungeon. He wrote "The Consolations inspired by Philosophy," and laid down his book at the foot of the scaffold. Marcus Aurelius honoured the throne of the world by those modest virtues which shone still brighter in obscurity. Fenelon was raised to the highest dignities only to experience their bitterness, and, like his great predecessor, to owe his glory and his happy days only to wisdom and retirement. Franklin will be remembered in all time, not as the governor, legislator, and ambassador, but as having trained himself to his admirable philosophy of common sense amidst the laborious occupations of a printer.

The certainty of acquiring the self-respect of conscious usefulness, a certainty which the great can seldom have, ought alone to determine a wise man to quit his obscurity. But if the emoluments and honours of a high station seduce us, let us value our independence, and let us not exchange treasures for tinsel.

We have freedom to avoid every culpable action, and to contemplate with pity the chimeras of ambition. Let us see if in misfortune we can preserve tranquillity of mind.

---

## LETTER VII.

## OF MISFORTUNE.

IF we wish our precepts to be followed, we must avoid the extremes to which moralists and philosophers are too much inclined to press their doctrines, for they are impracticable in real life. It is useless to deny that there are evils against which the aids of reason and friendship are powerless. Let us leave him who is about to lose a being whose life is blended with his own, to groan unreproved. Time alone can enfeeble his remembrances and assuage his pain. To render man inaccessible to suffering would be to change his nature. Those austere moralists who treat our feebleness with disdain, and who would render us indifferent to the most terrible blows of destiny, would at the same time leave us no sensibility to taste pleasure. Nothing can be more absurd than the vain harangues by which common-place consolation is offered to those who mourn a wife, a child, a friend. All reasonings are ineffectual when opposed to these words, "I have lost the loved one. You inform me that my misfortune is without a remedy. Oh ! if there were a remedy, instead of unavailing tears, I would employ it. It is precisely because there is none that I grieve." "Your tears are useless." "Still they serve to solace me." "God has done it." "True, and God has formed my heart to suffer from his blow." "Your child is happy, and knew neither the errors nor the sorrows of life." "A parent's instinc-

tive love inspired the desire that I might teach it to avoid both, and obtain happiness." "In the course of a long career your friend gave an example of all the virtues." "It is because the loss of these virtues is irreparable to me that I must deplore his death."<sup>11</sup>

The greater portion of men, I admit, exaggerating their regrets, pay a tribute of dissembled grief rather to opinion than to nature; and cold declamation and frivolous distractions are sufficient to console them. But the orators of consolation sometimes press their lessons on hearts which are really bleeding. Let such groan at liberty, and attempt not to contradict nature. Solitude may exalt the imagination; but it also inspires consoling ideas. In the silence of its refuge the desolate mourner brings himself to a nearer communion with him he regrets. He invokes, sees, and addresses him. Grief is more ingenious than we imagine in finding consolation, and has learned to employ different remedies according as the wounds are slight or deep. Two persons have each lost a dear friend. The one studiously avoids the places where he used to meet his friend. The other repairs to his desolate haunts, and, surrounding himself by monuments associated with his memory, he seeks, if I may so say, to restore him to life.

The death of a beloved wife is, perhaps, the most inconsolable of evils. Let this follow a series of other misfortunes, and it so effaces their remembrance that the sufferer feels he has not until then known real grief. But if this affliction be one under which our strength is broken, let it be the only one to obtain this fatal triumph. Under all other misfortunes we may

find in ourselves resources for sustaining them ; and may invariably either evade or assuage them, or mitigate their bitterness by resignation.

Moralists have expatiated upon the manner in which a sage ought to contemplate the evils of life. Instead of subscribing to their trite maxims, often more imposing than practicable, I sketch a summary of my philosophy. I caution the feeble and erring beings that surround me not to dream of unmixed happiness. I invite them to partake promptly of all innocent pleasures. The evils too often appended to them may follow. Know nothing of those which have no existence except in opinion. Struggle with courage to escape all that may be evaded. But if it become inevitable to meet them, let resignation, closing your eyes on the past, secure the repose of patient endurance when happiness exists for you no longer.

Permit me to give these ideas some development. If I may believe the most prevalent modern philosophy, tranquillity of mind is the result of organization or temperament, and of circumstances. It is the burden of my inculcation, that it may be of our own procuring, and that we owe it still more to the masculine exercise of our reason, discipline, and mental energy, than to our temperament or condition.

We have reason to deplore that unhappy being, who, yielding to dreams of pleasure, forgets to forearm himself against a fatal awakening. The history of great political convulsions, and, more than all, that of the French revolution furnishes impressive examples of this spectacle. It offers more than one instance, in the feebler sex, of persons, who seemed created

only to respire happiness. To the advantages of youth, talent, and beauty, were united the most exalted rank and wealth, pleasure and power, apparently to the extent of their wishes. To the dazzling fascination with which a brilliant crowd surrounded their inexperience, many of them united the richer domestic enjoyments of the wife and mother. In the midst of their illusions, the revolutionary shout struck their ear like a thunderstroke. Executioners bade them ascend the scaffold.<sup>12</sup>

These great catastrophes, I know, are rare. But there will never cease to be sorrows which will receive their last bitterness only in death. They are all too painful to be sustained, unless they have been wisely foreseen. Let us think of misfortune, as of certain characters, with whom our lot may one day compel us to consort.

It is novelty alone which gives our emotions extreme keenness. Whoever has strength of character, may learn to endure anything. The red men of the American wilderness are most impressive examples of this truth. Time, however, is the most efficacious teacher of the lesson of endurance. Poussin, in his painting of Eudomidas, has delineated the human heart with fidelity. The young girl of the piece abandons herself to despair. Half stretched upon the earth, her head falls supinely on the knees of the aged mother of the dying. This mother is sitting. Her attitude announces mingled meditation and grief. Amidst her tears we trace firmness on her visage. One of the two women is taking her first lesson of misery.

The other has already passed through a long apprenticeship of grief.<sup>13</sup>

Reflection imparts anticipated experience. It takes from misery that air of novelty which renders it terrible. When a wise man experiences a reverse, his new position has been foreseen. He has measured the sorrows, and prepared the consolations. Into whatever scene of trial he is brought, he will show in no one the embarrassment of a stranger.

Taught to be conscious that we are feeble combatants, thrown upon an arena of strife, let us not calculate that destiny has no blows in store for us. Let us prepare for wounds painful and slow to heal. Let us blunt the darts of misfortune in advance. Then, if they strike, they will not penetrate so deep. But in premeditating the trials which may be in reserve for our courage, let not anticipated solicitude disturb the present. Of all mental efforts, foresight is the most difficult to regulate. If we have it not, we fall into reverses unprepared. If we exercise it too far, we are perpetually miserable by anticipation.

The philosopher prepares himself for contingent perils by processes which impart a keener pleasure to present enjoyment. He better understands the value of the moments of joy, and learns to dispel the fears which might mar their tranquillity. That is a gloomy wisdom, which condemns the precepts that invite us to draw, from the uncertainty of our lot, a motive to embellish the moment of actual happiness. Transient beings, around whom everything is changing and in motion, adopt my maxims. Let us aid those who sur-

round us to put them in practice. Let us render those who are happy to-day more happy. To-morrow the opportunity may have passed for ever.

As though nature had not sowed sufficient sorrows in our path during our short career, we have added to the mass by our own invention. The offspring of our vanity and puerile prejudices, these factitious pains seem sometimes more difficult to support than real evils. A warrior, who has shewn fearless courage in the deadly breach, has passed a sleepless night because he was not invited to a party or a feast; or, because a riband or a diploma has not been added to the many with which he is already decorated. I had been informed, that the wife and son of a distinguished acquaintance were dangerously sick. I met him pale and thoughtful. I was meditating how to give him hope in regard to the objects of his supposed anxiety. While I was hesitating how to address him, he made known the subject of his real inquietude. He was in expectation of a high employment. The man of power, in whose hand was the gift, had just received him coldly a second time. He was anxiously calculating his remaining chances, and striving to divine the causes of his discouraging reception.

To avoid such ridiculous agonies, let us adopt a maxim, not the less true, because the phrase in which I express it may seem trivial. Three quarters and half the remaining quarter of our vexations are not worth wasting a thought upon their cause. I add, that even in expectations which appear important, we ought to fear trusting too little to chance. The order of events, which we call by this name, is often more sage than

any that human calculation can arrange. If it decides in a manner which at first view seems greatly against us, let us defer our accusations until we have more thoroughly tested the event. I have met a man, who had long been an aspirant for a certain place, with a radiant countenance, having just obtained it. Three months afterwards, he would have purchased at any price the power of recalling events. I have seen another friend in desolation, because he could not obtain the hand of the daughter of a man whose enterprises promised an immense fortune. He had been rejected. The speculations of her father all failed; and the reputation of his integrity and good faith with them. The despairing lover would have shared the poverty and disgrace of a helpless family; and would have been tormented, besides, with an incompatible union, of itself sufficient to have rendered him miserable in the midst of all the expected prosperity. One event is contemplated with a charmed eye; another with despair. The issue alone can declare which of the two we ought to have desired.

I grant, that we are surrounded by real dangers. I pretend not to be above suffering; and I attach no merit to becoming the reckless dupe of men or chance. The highest philosophy is at the same time the most simple and practicable. There is no error more common than one which is taken for profound wisdom. Most men look too deep for the springs of events, and the motives of action. In many alternatives we shall be most wise in giving the reins to chance. When we are menaced by an evident peril, let us summon all our energy, and courageously struggle to ward it off. If,

after all, neither wisdom can evade it, nor bravery vanquish it, let us see how true wisdom ordains us to sustain it.

How many are ignorant of the value of resignation, or confound it with weakness! The courage of resignation is, perhaps, the most high and rare of all the forms of that virtue. Man received the gift directly from the Author of his being. His desires, inquietudes, misguided opinions, the fruits of an ambitious and incongruous education, have weakened its force in the soul. Who can read the anecdote of the American wilderness without thrilling emotion? An Indian, descending the Niagara river, was drawn into the rapids above the sublime cataract. The nursling of the desert rowed with incredible vigour at first, in an intense struggle for life. Seeing his efforts useless, he dropped his oars, sung his death song, and floated in calmness down the abyss. His example is worthy of imitation. While there is hope, let us nerve all our force to avail ourselves of all the chances it suggests. When hope ceases, and the peril must be braved, wisdom counsels calm resignation.<sup>14</sup>

In regard to unconquerable evils, the true doctrine is not vain resistance, but profound submission. It conceals the outline of what we have to suffer as with a veil. It hastens to bring us the fruit of consoling time. It opens our eyes to a clearer view of the possessions which remain to us. It precedes hope as twilight ushers in the day.

It is by laying down certain well ascertained principles of conduct, and re-examining them every day, that a new empire is given to reason, and that we learn to

select the most eligible point in all situations in life. The Greek philosophers were, incontestably, the men who best understood the art of becoming happy. Their studies led them to the unwearied contemplation of the true good, the advantages of elevation of mind, the danger of the passions, and a calm submission to inevitable ills. Such were the habitual subjects of their meditations and discourses. They suffered less from the evils of life, only because they cultivated habits of profound reflection.

Among the moderns, in pursuit of happiness, some study only to multiply their physical enjoyments; and limited to gross sensations, differ little from brutes, except in discoursing about what they eat. Others, higher in the scale of thought, cultivate the pleasures of literature and the fine arts. But disciplining but a single class of their powers, with a view to distinguish themselves from the vulgar, they are not always more happy. True philosophy is chiefly conversant about that kind of acquisition, which pre-eminently constitutes the rational man, forms his reason, and places him as a master in the midst of an unreflecting world surrounded by children full of ignorance and fatuity.

---

### LETTER VIII.

#### OF INDEPENDENCE.

We distinguish many kinds of liberty. That which we owe to equal laws, without being indispensable to a philosopher, renders the attainment of happiness

more easy to him. However men differ in their political opinions, they all have an instinctive desire to be free. Every one is reluctant and afraid to submit himself to the capricious power of those about him. The thirst of power is only another form of this ardour for independence.

With what interest we read in history of those ignorant tribes, unknown to fame, whose liberty and simple manners at once astonish and delight us? When visiting the isles of Greece, where the charm of memory rendered the view of their actual slavery more revolting, what delight the traveller experiences in traversing the little isle of Casos which had never submitted to the Ottoman yoke! He there found the usages of the ancient Greeks, their costume, their beauty, and their amiable and elevated natural manner. This isle is but a rock. But its dangerous shores have defended it against tyranny. Associations with the songs of Homer and Hesiod are renewed. Such a picture delights even a people whose manners are refined to a degree tending to depravation. Thus those opulent citizens who find the country a place of exile still decorate their splendid halls with landscapes and flowers.

Let not a sensitive and wandering imagination kindle too readily at the recitals of travellers. Were we to transport ourselves to one of those remote points of the earth where felicity is represented to have chosen her asylum, new usages, manners and pleasures, and a foreign people every moment reminding us that we are strangers, would, perhaps, give birth to the most painful regrets. When in our youth we were charmed as we

read of the prodigies of Athens and Rome, we uttered the wish that we had been born in those renowned republics. There is little doubt that, had our wish been realized, we should be glad to escape their storms in exchange for obscurely tranquil days.

It is a distinguished folly which impels men far from their country in search of happiness. The greater portion, deceived in their hopes, after having wandered amidst danger, die with regret and sorrow, worn out with vexation resulting from the broken ties and remembrances of home. Home is the last thought that comes over the departing mind. “*Et dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos.*” *Ubi patria ibi bene* is an adage which contains as much wise observation as elevated patriotism. Our country is our common mother. We ought to love and sustain her more firmly in her misery than in her prosperity.

Whatever manners, opinions, and talents we carry into another country, we are still strangers there. The manners which we adopt are new and irksome. The eye sees nothing to awaken dear and embellished remembrances; and we find in the heart of no one the reverberating chord of ancient friendship and sympathy. We always regret the places where we knew the first pleasures and the first pains, and saw the first enchanting visions of life; the cherished spots where we learned to love and be loved. If, returning there, drawn back by an invincible sentiment, after a long absence we see it again, what sorrows await us! We find ourselves strangers in our own country. We ask for our parents and friends who departed in succession.

The blows were struck at long intervals. We receive them all in a moment. We return to shed tears only on the tombs of our fathers!<sup>15</sup>

Retreat and competence everywhere supply a wise man a degree of independence. Even when the sport of oppression and injustice, he yields to these evils as the caprices of destiny. He would be free in the midst of Constantinople under the government of the sultan.

Another kind of liberty is the portion of but a few in our own country—the liberty of disposing of our whole time at our choice. To those who understand not the value of time, this liberty bequeaths a heavy bondage. But to those who have learned the secret of happiness it is of inestimable value. The privilege of the favoured possessor of opulence is a high one. Neither the slave of business, fashion, opinion, or routine, it is in his power at awaking to say, “This day is all my own.”<sup>15</sup>

But moralists exclaim, “You must pay your debt: you must render yourselves useful to society.” Let me not be understood to inculcate the doctrine of indolence. Industry will have wings and power when you unite it to freedom. But how many repeat the hackneyed cry of “the debt to society,” who, in the choice of their profession, had never a thought but of its honours and emoluments! This man whose industry in the pursuit of his choice proves that his toil is his pleasure, that man who is in earnest to serve every one whom he can oblige and who might have shone, had he chosen it, in the career of ambition, but who, modest, proud, studious and free, lives happily in the bosom of retreat, has this man done nothing to acquit his debt? Is his example useless to society?

If my condition deny me leisure and independence in regard to the disposal of my time, without bestowing much concern upon the choice of my profession, I should choose that most favourable to free thoughts, to breathing the open air, and, as much as might be, in view of a beautiful nature. I should consider it as a most important element in my happiness that I should be chiefly conversant with people of compatible characters. The profession of an advocate, perpetually conversant with the follies, vices, and crimes of society, is one of the most trying both to integrity and philosophy. That of the physician, continually witnessing groans, tears, and physical suffering, however painful to sensibility, may become the source of high reflected pleasure to a generous and humane heart. I would avoid a function the disquieting responsibility of which would disturb my sleep. Above all, I should dread one of high honour and emolument, connected with proportionate uncertainty of tenure.

The balance of enjoyment being taken into view, I should prefer an occupation of privacy. It would be more easy at once to obtain and preserve. It would expose me less to envy and competition. Exempt from the inquietudes inspired by severe labours, and the ennui of important etiquette, I should at least find an absolute independence, every evening, at the relinquishment of my daily routine of occupation, and I should suffer no care for the morrow; I would learn to enhance the charms of my condition by thinking of the agitation, regrets, and alarms of those who are still by the whirlwinds of life. In this way I would him who, to procure a more delicious repose,

placed his couch under a tent near the sea, to be lulled by the dashing of its waves and the noise of its storms. But it is time to contemplate the most useful kind of liberty, the only indispensable kind, and happily one which is accessible to all. It is the liberty resulting from self-command and inward mastery of ourselves. It has a value to cause all others to be forgotten—a value which no other kind can replace.

What liberty can that man enjoy who is the slave of ambition? A gesture, a look of the eye, a smile affrightens him and causes him painful and trembling calculations what that sinister sign of his master may presage.

Look at the opulent merchant whose hopes are the sport of the winds, seas, robbers, changes of trade, municipal regulations, and a crowd of agents who seem subordinate, but who really command him.

Whatever kind of liberty we aim to possess we may certainly conclude that the surest means to enjoy it is to have few wants. But how restrain our wants? The greater portion are happily placed by their condition where they are ignorant of the objects which most powerfully excite and seduce desire. The golden mean secludes them from many temptations full of the bitterest regret, and exacts of them little effort of wisdom. In the class of men of leisure and elevated mind there are two means of rising above many wants.

The more austere philosophers have altogether disdained those pleasures which they could never hope to obtain. Reducing themselves to the limits of the strictest necessity, they indemnify themselves for some privations by the certainty of being secured from many

pains, and by the sentiment of conscious independence. This is, doubtless, one of the surest means of obtaining independence ; and they who attempt to employ any other, differ from the vulgar by their principles rather than their conduct.

How many objects, of which the contemplation awakens the desires, would have nothing dangerous if we could always exercise a stern self-control over our minds ! The surest means of exercising this self-control is to reduce the number of our wants. To do it, I admit, demands a rare elevation of mind, and the exercise of a high degree of philosophy. But, since its value is beyond its cost, let us dare to acquire it.

While the fleeting dreams of pleasure hover around us, let reason still say to us, “ An instant may dissipate them.” Let us, then, be ready to find a new pleasure in the consciousness of our firmness and our masculine and vigorous independence. An enlightened mind reigns over pleasures ; and while they glitter around, enjoys all that are innocent, but despairs a sigh or a regret when they have taken wings and disappeared.

I commend the example of Alcibiades, the disciple of the graces and of wisdom, who astonished, in turn, the proud Persian by his dignity, and the Lacedemonian by his austerity. His enemies may charge him with incessant change of principle. To me he seems always the same, always superior to the men and circumstances that surround him. Such strong mental stamina resemble those robust plants that sustain, without annoyance, the extremes of heat and cold.

## LETTER IX.

## OF HEALTH.

HEALTH results from moderation, gaiety, and the absence of care. Eternal wisdom has ordained, that the emotions which disturb our days, are those which have a natural tendency to shorten them.<sup>16</sup>

If there were ground for a single charge against the justice of nature, it would be, that the errors of inexperience seem punished with too great severity. We prodigally waste the material of life and enjoyment, as we do our other possessions, as if we thought it inexhaustible.

To the errors of youth succeed the vices of mature age. Ambition and cupidity, envy and hatred concur to devour the very aliment of life. The storms which prostrate the moral faculties, equally sap the physical energy. Every debasing passion is a consuming poison. To what other source of evil can we assign those inquietudes and puerile anxieties which disturb the days of the greater portion of mankind? They are occupied by trifling interests, and agitated by vain debates. They watch for futile excitements, and are in desolation from chimerical troubles. Pleasant emotions sustain life, and produce upon it the effect of a gentle current of air upon flame. Trains of thought habitually elevated, and sometimes inclined to reverie, impart pure and true gaiety to the soul. To be able to command this train is one of the rarest felicities of endowment. A distinguished physician recorded in his tab-

lets the apparent paradox, that three quarters of men die of vexation or grief.

Huffland has published a work, upon the art of prolonging life, full of interesting observations. "Philosophers," says he, "enjoy a delightful leisure. Their thoughts, generally estranged from vulgar interests, have nothing in common with those afflicting ideas, with which other men are continually agitated and corroded. Their reflections are agreeable by their variety, their vague liberty, and sometimes even by their frivolity. Devoted to the pursuits of their choice, the occupations of their taste, they dispose freely of their time. Oftentimes they surround themselves with young people, that their natural vivacity may be communicated to them, and, in some sort, produce a renewal of their youth. We may make a distinction between the different kinds of philosophy, in relation to their influence upon the duration of life. Those which direct the mind towards sublime contemplations, even were they in some degree superstitious, such as those of Pythagoras and Plato, are the most salutary. Next to them, I place those, the study of which, embracing nature, gives enlarged and elevated ideas upon infinity, the stars, the wonders of the universe, the heroic virtues, and other similar subjects. Such were those of Democritus, Philolaus, Xenophanes, the Stoics, and the ancient astronomers.

"I may cite next those less profound thinkers, who, instead of exacting difficult researches, seemed destined only to amuse the mind; the followers of which philosophy, deviating wide from vulgar opinion, peaceably sustain the arguments for and against the propo-

sitions advanced. Such was the philosophy of Carneades and the Academicians, to whom we may add the Grammarians and Rhetoricians.

“ But those which turn only upon painful subtilties, which are affirmative, dogmatic, and positive, which bend all facts and opinions to form and adjust them to certain pre-conceived principles and invariable measures ; in fine, such as are thorny, arid, narrow, and contentious, these are fatal in tendency, and cannot but abridge the life of those who cultivate them. Of this class was the philosophy of the Peripatetics, and that also of the Scholastics.”

Tumultuous passions and corroding cares are two sources of evil influences which philosophy avoids. Another influence, adverse to life, is that mental feebleness, which renders persons perpetually solicitous about their health, effeminate and unhappy. Fixing their thoughts intensely on the functions of life, those functions, that are subjects of this anxious inspection, labour. Imagining themselves sick, they soon become so. The undoubting confidence that we shall not be sick, is perhaps the best prophylactic for preserving health.

I am ignorant of the exact influence of moral upon physical action, in relation to health. But of this I am confident, that it is prodigious ; that physicians have not made it a sufficient element in their calculations, or employed it as they should ; and that in future, under a wise and more philosophic direction, it may operate an immense result, both in restoring and preserving health.

A man reads a letter which announces misfortunes

or sinister events. His head turns. His appetite ceases. He becomes faint and oppressed ; and his life is in danger. No contagion, however, no physical blow has touched him. A thought has palsied his forces in a moment ; and has successively deranged every spring of life. We have read of persons of feeble and uninformed mind, who have fallen sick, in consequence of the cruel sport of those who have ingeniously alarmed their imagination, and cautiously indicated to them a train of fatal symptoms. Since imagination can thus certainly overturn our physical powers, why may it not, under certain regulations, restore them ? Among the numberless recorded cases of cures, reputed miraculous, it is probable, that a great part may be accounted for on this principle.<sup>17</sup>

Suppose a paralytic disciple of the school of miracles, whose head is exalted with ideas of the mystic power of certain holy men, and who is meditating on the succour which he expects from a divine interposition manifested in his favour. In an ecstasy of faith, he sees a minister of heaven descend enveloped in light, who bids him "arise, and walk." In a moment the unknown nervous energy, excited by the mysterious power of faith, touches the countless inert and relaxed movements. The man arises and walks. During the siege of Lyons, when bombs fell on the hospital, the terrified paralytics arose and fled.

I am not disposed to question all the cures, which, in France, have been attributed to magnetism. We know what a salutary effect the sight of his physician produces on the patient who has confidence in him. His cheerful and encouraging conversations are among

the most efficient remedies. If we entertained a long cherished and intimate persuasion, that by certain signs, or touches, he could dispel our complaints, his gestures would have a high moral and physical influence. Magnetism was in this sense, as Bailly justly remarked, a true experiment upon the power of the imagination. At the moment of its greatest sway, while some regarded it as an infallible specific, and others deemed it entirely inefficient, another class held it in just estimation. I cite an extract from the report of the Academy of Science.

“We have sought,” say they, “to recognise the presence of the magnetic fluid. But it escaped our senses. It was said, that its action upon animated bodies was the sole proof of its existence. The experiments which we made upon ourselves, convinced us, that as soon as we diverted our attention, it was powerless. Trials made upon the sick, taught us, that infancy, which is unsusceptible of prejudice, experienced nothing from it; that mental alienation resisted the action of magnetism, even in an habitual condition of excitability of the nerves, where the action ought to have been most sensible. The effects which are attributed to this fluid are not visible, except when the imagination is forewarned and capable of being struck. Imagination, then, seems to be the principle of the action.

“It remained to be seen, whether we could reproduce these effects by the influence of imagination alone. We attempted it, and fully succeeded. Without touching the subjects, who believed themselves magnetised, and without employing any sign, they

complained of pain and a great sensation of heat. On subjects endowed with more excitable nerves, we produced convulsions, and what they called *crises*. We have seen an exalted imagination become sufficiently energetic to take away the power of speech in a moment. At the same time, we proved the nullity of magnetism, put in opposition with the imagination. Magnetism alone, employed for thirty minutes, produced no effect. Imagination put in action produced upon the same person, with the same means, in circumstances absolutely similar, a strong and well defined convulsion.

“ In fine, to complete the demonstration, and to finish the painting of the effect of the imagination, a power equally capable of agitating and calming, we have caused those convulsions to cease by the same power which produced them — the power of the imagination.

“ What we have learned, or, at least what has been confirmed to us in a demonstrative and evident manner, by examination of the processes of magnetism, is, that man can act upon man at every moment and almost at will, by striking his imagination; that signs and gestures the most simple may have effects the most powerful, and that the influence which may be exerted upon the imagination, may be reduced to an art, and conducted by method.”

These truths had never before acquired so much evidence. We know that cures may be wrought by the single influence of imagination. Ambrose Paré Boerhaave, and many other physicians, have cited striking proofs of this fact. The first of these writers

procured abundant sweats for a patient, in making him believe that a perfectly inert substance given him, was a violent sudorific.

It is worthy of the attention of moralists and physiologists, as well as physicians, to examine, to what point we may obtain salutary effects by exciting the imagination. But, perhaps, there would soon be cause to dread the perilous influence of this art, which can kill as well as make alive. This excitable and vivid faculty is never more easily put in operation than when acted upon by the presentiments of charlatanism and superstition.

We possess another means of operation, which may be exercised without danger, and the power of which is, also, capable of producing prodigies. Education rendering most men feeble and timid, they are ignorant how much an energetic will can accomplish. It is able to shield us from many maladies, and to hasten the cure of those under which we labour.

In mortal epidemics, the physicians, who are alarmed at their danger, are ordinarily the first victims. Fear plunges the system into that state of debility which predisposes it to fatal impressions, while the moral force of confidence, communicating its aid to physical energy, enables it to repel contagion.

I could cite many distinguished names of men, who attributed their cure, in desperate maladies, to the courage which never forsook them, and to the efforts which they made to keep alive the vital spark when ready to become extinct. One of them pleasantly said, "I should have died like the rest, had I wished it."<sup>18</sup>

Pecklin, Barthes, and others, think that extreme desire to see a beloved person once more, has sometimes a power to retard death. It is a delightful idea. I feel with what intense ardor one might desire to live another day, another hour, to see a friend or a child for the last time. The flame of love, replacing that of life, blazes up for a moment before both are quenched in the final darkness. The last prayer is accorded, and life terminates in tasting that pleasure for which it was prolonged. If this be true, the principle on which the most touching incident of romance is founded, is not a fiction.

I have no need to say that an energetic will to recover from sickness has no point of analogy with that fearful solicitude which the greater part of the sick experience. The latter, produced by mental feebleness, increases the inquietude and aggravates the danger. Even indifference would be preferable. If education had imparted to us the advantages of an energetic will and real force of mind, if from infancy we had been convinced of the efficacy of this moral power, we have no means to determine that it would not have been in union with the desire of life, an element in the means of healing our maladies.

Medicine is still a science so conjectural that the most salutary method of cure, in my view, is that which strives not to contradict nature, but to second her efforts by moral means. I am ready to believe that amidst the real or imagined triumphs of science, those of medicine will, in the centuries to come, hold a rank to which its past achievements will have borne no proportion. But what an immense amount of

experiment will be necessary ! How many unfortunate beings must contribute to the expense of these experiments !

Contrary to the general opinion, I highly esteem physicians, and think but very little of medicine. In the profession of medicine we find the greatest number of men of solid minds and various erudition, and the best friends of humanity. But they are in the habit of vaunting the progress of their science. To me it seems incessantly changing its principles, without ever varying its results. The systems of various great men have been successively received and rejected. Do we, however, imagine that the great physicians who have preceded us were more unfortunate in their practice than those of our days ? Among the most eminent physicians of our cities, one practises by administering strong cathartics. Another is resolute for copious bleeding. A third bids us watch and wait the indications of nature. Each of these assumes that the system of the rest is fatal—and so, it would seem, it should be. At the end of the year, however, I doubt if any one of them all has more reproaches to make, as regards want of success, than any other.

From these facts, there are those who hold that it is most prudent to confide to nature, as the physician ; forgetful that if he could bring no other remedy than hope, he unites moral to physical aid. Yet the very persons who, in health, are readiest to maintain this doctrine, like children who are heroes during the day but cowards in the dark, when they are sick, are as prompt as others in sending for the physician.

Even if agitation and fear had not fatal effects, in rendering us more accessible to maladies, wisdom would strive to banish them, in pursuit of the science of happiness. Fear, by anticipating agony, doubles our sufferings. If there could exist a rational ground for continual inquietude, it would be found in a frail constitution. But how many men of the feeblest health survive those of the most vigorous and robust frame! Calculations upon the duration of life are so uncertain that we can always make them in our favour.

To him who cultivates a mild and pleasant philosophy, old age itself should not be contemplated with alarm. It may seem a paradox to say that all men are nearly of the same age, in reference to their chances of another day. Men are as confident of seeing to-morrow and the succeeding day, at eighty, as at sixteen. Such is the beautiful veil with which nature conceals from us the darkness of the future.

In general, men have less sympathy for the suffering than their condition ought to inspire. We meet them with a sad face, and are more earnest to shew them that we are afflicted ourselves, than to seek to cheer their dejection. We multiply so many questions touching their health that it would seem as if we feared to allow them to forget that they were sick.

Of all subjects of conversation, my own pains and physical infirmities have become the least interesting to me; as I know they must be to others. I do not wish that those who surround my sick bed should converse as though arranging the preparations for my last dress, or determining the hour of my interment.

If we would live in peace, and die in tranquillity, let us, as much as possible, avoid importunate cares. Our business is to unite as many friends as we may, and to beguile pain and sorrow by treasuring as many resources of innocent amusement as our means will admit. If our sufferings become painful and incurable, we must concentrate our mental energy and settle on our solitary powers of endurance. We die, or we recover. Nature, though calm, moves irresistibly to her point; and complaint is always worse than useless.<sup>19</sup>

But in arming ourselves with courage to support our own evils, let us preserve sensibility and sympathy for the sufferings of others. It is among the dangerously sick that we find those unfortunate beings who are most worthy to inspire our pity. Their only expectation is death, preceded by cruel tortures; and yet they probably suffer less for themselves than for weeping dependants whom they are leaving, it may be, without a single prop. Ah! during the few days of sorrow that remain to them on the earth, how earnestly ought we to strive to mitigate their pains, to calm their alarms, and animate their feeble hopes! Blessed be that beneficent being who shall call one smile more upon their dying lips!<sup>20</sup>

---

#### LETTER X.

##### OF COMPETENCE.

PRETENDED sages announce to us, with sententious gravity, that virtue ought to be the single object of

our desires ; that, strengthened by it, we can support privations and misery without suffering. Useless moralists ! Shall I yield faith to precepts which the experience of every day falsifies ? It is only necessary, in refutation, to present a man who has broken his limb, or whose children suffer hunger.

His plan is wise, who examines, with a judgment free from ambition, the amount of fortune necessary to competence in his case, viewed in all its bearings ; and commences the steady pursuit of it. Having reached that measure, if his desires impel him beyond the limit which, in a more reasonable hour, he prescribed for himself, he henceforward strives to be happy by sacrificing enjoyment. He barteres it for a very uncertain means of purchasing even pleasures. In this way competence becomes useless to the greater part of those who obtain it. Victims of the common folly, and still wishing a little more, they lose, in the effort to get rich, the time which they ought to spend in enjoyment. We see grasping and adroit speculators on every side ; and, but rarely, men who know how to employ the resources of a moderate fortune. It is not the art of acquiring beyond competence, but of wisely spending, that we need to learn.

Our business in life is to be happy ; and yet, simple and obvious as this truism is, the greater number disdain or forget it. To judge from the passions and objects that we see exciting man to action, we should suppose that he was placed on the earth, not to become happy, but rich.

To what purpose so many cares and studies ? "That man," we are answered with a peculiar em-

phasis, "has an immense income." In his rare, brilliant, and envied condition, if he does not vegetate under the weight of ennui, I recognise in him a man of astonishing merit.

The opulent may be divided into two classes. The employment of the one is to watch over their expenditures. The other study the mode of dissipating their revenue. Can I present in detail, the cares and vexations which an immense fortune brings? The possessor leaves discussion with his tenants, to commence angry disputes with his workmen. From these he departs to listen to the schemes of projectors, or to the information of advocates. Is not such a result dearly purchased at the expense of repose, independence, and time? Would it not be better to relinquish a part of these possessions, in order to dispose in peace of the remainder? I admit that a man who devotes himself to lucrative pursuits is not overwhelmed with continual ennui. The banker respires again, after having grown pale over his accounts. A speculation has succeeded, and the enchantment of success banishes his alarms, fatigues, and slavery. But he whose purpose in life is to secure as many happy moments as he can, and who sees how many innocent pleasures the other allows to escape him, would refuse his fortune at the price which he pays for it.

Another opulent class inherit fortunes acquired by the industry and sacrifices of their fathers. Rendered effeminate in a school, the reverse of that in which their fathers were trained, without resources in themselves, accustomed from infancy to have their least desires anticipated, under the influence of feeble

parents, pliant and servile instructors, greedy servants, and a seducing world, their appetite is early palled, and every pleasure in life worn out.

But suppose the rich heir brought up as though he were not rich, destiny places before him a strange alternative. If he succeed in resisting desires which every thing excites and favours, what painful struggles ! If he yield to them, what effort can preserve him an untainted mind ? The experience of all time declares the improbability that he will resist. So many pretended friends are at hand to take up the cause of the present against the future, a cause too, which always finds a powerful patron in our own bosoms ! The pleasures of the senses have, besides this dangerous advantage, that before we have tasted them we are sufficiently instructed by the imagination, that we shall receive vivid and delightful emotions from their indulgence. We are not certain that pleasures of a higher class have a charm of enchantment until after we have made the happy experiment. Thus every thing prepares the opulent for the sadness of satiety, moral disgust, and ennui without end, the only suffering of life which is not softened by hope.

You will sometimes see these men at public places where they are professedly in search of amusement, giving no sign of existence except by an occasional yawn. Cast your eyes on those spectators who are alive to the most vivid enthusiasm. They are young students or mechanics who have economised ten days to spend an hour of the eleventh in this amusement !<sup>21</sup> It is in clean cottages, in small but well directed establishments, that pleasures are vivid, because they are

obtained at a price, and through industry and order. A festival is projected, or a holiday returns. Friends are assembled, and how blithe and free is the joy! A slight economy has been practised to supply the moderate expenses. There is high pleasure in looking forward to the epoch and in making the arrangements in anticipation. There is still more pleasure in the remembrance. When the interval which separates us from pleasure is not very long, even this interval has charms.

What a touching narrative is recorded of the suppers of two of the greatest men of the past age, of whom one was the *Abbe de Condillac*. Both were so poor that the expenses were reduced to absolute necessities. But what conversations prolonged the repast, and with what swiftness flew the enchanted hours! Neither great genius nor profound acquirements are necessary to enjoy evenings equally pleasant.

In an establishment of moderate competence, those who compose it rarely leave it. All the joys which spring up in the bosom of a beloved family seem to have been created for them. Give them riches, without changing their hearts, and they would taste less pleasure. New duties and amusements would trench upon a part of that time which had hitherto been sacred to friendship. More conversant with society, they would be less together. Receiving more visitants, they would see fewer friends. Transported into a new sphere where a thousand objects of comparison would excite their desires, they would, perhaps, for the first time, experience privations and regrets.

Women and young people taste the advantages which a retired, pleasant, and modest condition offers only so long as they avoid comparisons of that lot with one which the world considers more favoured. *We must carry into the world a high philosophy, or never quit our retreat.*

Persons even of a disciplined reason, just thought, and a noble character, may grow dizzy, for a moment, with the splendour and noise of opulence, perceived for the first time. But as soon as they begin to blush and forfeit self-respect in tracing the causes of their intoxication, the scene vanishes, and, as they contemplate and compare, it is replaced by the sentiment of their own happiness. In the midst of the brilliant crowd they experience a legitimate pride in saying, "From how many regrets and cares am I saved ! How many futilities are here, of which I have no need !"

But I shall be told that opulence has at least this advantage, that it attracts consideration. There is no doubt that many people measure the esteem they pay you by the scale of your riches. You will never persuade them that merit often walks on foot, while stupidit rides in a carriage.

But will a man esteem himself a philosopher, and take into his calculation the opinion of such fools as these ? In a circle where opulence puts forth its splendour, when you experience a slight revulsion of shame in perceiving that the simplicity of your dress is remarked, ask yourself if you would change your mode of life, character, and talents with those around you ? If you feel that you would not, repress the

weakness of wishing incompatible advantages ; and resume the self-respect of an honest man.<sup>21</sup>

To be satisfied with a moderate fortune is, perhaps, the highest test and best proof of philosophy. All others seem to me doubtful. He who can live content on a little, gives a pledge that he would preserve his probity and courage in the most difficult situations. He has placed his virtue, repose, and happiness as far as possible above the caprices of his kind, and the vicissitudes of earthly things.

There are moments when the desire of wealth penetrates even the retreat of a sage, not with the puerile and dangerous wish to dazzle with show, but with the hope, dear to a good mind, that it might become a means of extended usefulness. When imagination creates her gay visions, we sometimes think of riches, and in our dreams make an employment of them worthy of envy. What a delightful field then opens before those who possess riches ? They can encourage the progress of science, and aid in advancing the glory of letters. How much assistance they can offer to deserving young people whose first efforts announce happy dispositions, and whose character, at the same time, little fitted for worldly success, is a compound of independence and timidity ? How much they may honor themselves in decking the modest retreat of the aged scholar who has consecrated his life to study, and who has neglected his personal fortune to enrich the age with inventions of genius ! They have the means of giving a noble impulse to the arts, without trenching upon their resources. A picture, which perpetuates the remembrance of a generous or heroic

exploit, costs no more than a group of bacchanalians or debauchees. A career more beautiful still is open to opulence. Of how many vices and how many tears it may dry the source ! A rich man, to become happy, has only to wish to become so. He can not only immortalize his name as the patron of arts and useful inventions, but, what is better, can deserve the blessings of the miserable. Such pleasures are durable, and may be tasted, with unsated relish, after a settled lassitude from the indulgence of all others.<sup>22</sup>

Let not such seducing dreams, however, leave us a prey to ambitious and disappointing desires at our awakening. It is in the sphere where Providence has placed us, that we must search for the means of being useful ; and if there are pleasures which belong only to opulence, there are others which can best be found in mediocrity. Perhaps, in giving us riches, we shall realize but half the dream of virtue and contentment. "It seems to me," says Plato, "that gold and virtue were placed in the opposite scales of a balance ; and that we cannot throw an additional weight into one scale, without subtracting an equal amount from the other."

---

## LETTER XI.

### OF OPINION AND THE AFFECTION OF MEN.

IN selecting the same route, in which the agitated crowd is pressing onward, we are evidently on the

wrong road to happiness ; since we hear the multitude on every side expressing dissatisfaction with their life. If we choose a different path, we cannot expect to evade the shafts of censure, since the same multitude are naturally disposed, from pride of opinion, to think all, not on the same road with themselves, astray. It is, then, an egregious folly to hope for a happiness thus pursued by system, and for the approbation of the vulgar at the same time. Among the obstacles which are at war with our repose, one of the greatest, and at the same time most frivolous, is the fatal necessity of becoming of importance to others, instead of becoming calmly sufficient to ourselves. Like restless children, always seduced by appearances, it is a small point that we are happy in our condition. We desire that it should excite envy. A happiness which glares not in the eyes of the multitude, compelling them to take note of it, is no longer regarded as happiness. There are both dupes and victims of opinion. Those who are devoured by the fever of intrigue, and those who, to dazzle others, dissipate their fortune, are the miserable victims. The dupes are those who voluntarily weary themselves out of three quarters of their life, and offer this as their apology—"these visits, these ceremonies, these evening parties ! they are tiresome, we grant. But we must mix with good company." Why not always mix with the best—your own enlightened and free thoughts ?

I shall be obliged to present one truth under a thousand forms. It is that much courage is exacted for the attainment of happiness. Such a man has estimable qualities, an interesting family, tried friends,

a fortune equal to his wants. His lot ought to seem a delightful one. How differently the public judge! "This man," says the public, "has intelligence. Why has he not increased his fortune? He is able to distinguish himself. Why has he not sought place or office? He seems to stand aloof, that he may pique himself on a proud and foolish originality. We judge him less favourably. Every one distinguishes himself that can. To be without distinction is a proof that he has not power to acquire it." If the man, of whom this is said, has not courage, mourn over him. The public will end by rendering him ashamed of his happiness.

To hear the false reasoning of the multitude is not what astonishes me. That stupid people, full of self-esteem, should hold these foolish discourses, with strong emphasis, is perfectly natural. What I wonder at, is, that their maxims should guide people of understanding.

We are guilty of the whimsical contradiction of judging our own ideas with complacency, and of pronouncing upon those of others with severity. Yet we every day sacrifice principles which we esteem, through fear of being blamed by people whom we despise.<sup>23</sup>

The moment I escape the yoke of opinion, what a vast and serene horizon stretches out before my eyes! The pleasures of vanity scatter, like morning mists. Those of repose and independence remain. I no longer sacrifice to the disquieting desire of preserving a protector, or eclipsing my rivals. I am no longer the slave of gloomy etiquette. I henceforward prolong my

delightful evenings for my own enjoyment. The caprices of men have lost their empire over me. If poor, I shall remain a stranger to the pains excited by blasting ridicule and overwhelming contempt. If rich, indolent and impertinent people will no longer regulate my expenses; and the happy choice of my pleasures will multiply my riches. These are presented to a wise man in two opposite relations. Do they call for a service? The most tender interest excites him to their aid. Do they show a disposition to manage him? He meets the attempt only with profound disdain. He who possesses a disciplined reason, and a courageous mind, does not choose to walk by the faith of a feeble and uncertain guide who has need himself to be led. Allow yourself to become docile to the eccentric laws of opinion, and the slave of its imperious caprices, and follow it with the most earnest perseverance of loyalty; still it will finally terminate in condemning you.

But hypocrisy opens against me, and feeble men ask me, if it be not dangerous, thus to inculcate contempt of opinion? In following but a part of the ideas which I announce, my readers might be led astray. The whole must be adopted, for a fair experiment of the result. A physician had chosen many plants, from which to form a salutary decoction. His patient swallowed the juice of but one and was poisoned.

Let us discard that timidity which conducts to falsehood; and, to subserve morals, let us be faithful to truth. The wicked and the sage alike break the yoke of opinion; the former to increase his power of annoyance; the latter, that of doing good.

I can conceive that a depraved man will commit fewer faults in yielding to the caprices of opinion than in abandoning himself to his own errors. There are cruel passions and shameful vices which he reprobates even in the midst of his aberrations. But, in doing so, he gives to falsehood the name of politeness, and to cowardice the title of prudence. His favourite inculcation is, *the terror of ridicule*. To form true men, it is indispensable that this precept should be engraven on their hearts—*Fear nothing but remorse*.

The simple and generous mind that follows these lessons, and is worthy of happiness, need not blush in view of his course. Only let him march on with unshrinking courage. In breaking the yoke of opinion, let him fly the still more shameful chains which the passions impose. In contemning the prejudices of the multitude, dread still more those fatal instructors who treat morality as a popular fable, and pretend to the honour of dispelling our errors. The aberrations of opinion prove only, that the most bold, not the most virtuous, press forward to announce their principles. These principles cannot annihilate that secret and universal opinion, that voice of conscience, without which the moral world would have presented only a chaos, and the human race would have perished. Consult those men who have been instructed by the lessons of wisdom and experience. Consult those whom you would choose to resemble. Their first precept will be, that you descend into yourself. If we interrogate conscience in good faith, she will enlighten us. She makes herself heard in the tumult of our vices, even against our will. If she become distorted during the

storm of our passions, she recovers the serenity of truth, as soon as that passes away; as a river which has been agitated by a tempest, as soon as calm returns, reflects anew the verdure of the shores, and the azure of heaven.

If there were a people formed by sage laws, whose words were frank, and whose actions upright, there it would be a duty to hearken to the voice of opinion in religious silence, and to follow its decrees, as though they were those of the divinity. Phocion asked, what foolish thing he had done, when the Athenians applauded him? Happy the country where this would have been a criminal pleasantry, and where the pages of that chapter which condemns opinion, ought to be torn out.

Perhaps I may be accused of contradiction, in saying, that, in the enlightened pursuit of happiness, the opinion of the multitude must be received with neglect; and yet that it is pleasant to be esteemed by the society of which we are members. We receive their services, and ought to know the pleasure of obliging them. We often share those weaknesses which we censure in them. Our multiplied relations with them, render their affection desirable. It may not be necessary to happiness; but it gives to enjoyment a more vivid charm.

May we be able, in pursuing the path indicated by wisdom, to obtain esteem, and taste the delight of a sentiment still pleasanter, and more precious. Friendship is to esteem, what the flower is to the stem which sustains it.

But I can never imagine that we ought to become

subservient to the caprices of opinion. We should first be satisfied with ourselves; and afterwards, if it may be, with others. To merit affection, I perceive but two methods; to love our kind, and to cultivate those virtues which diffuse a charm over life.

---

## LETTER XII.

## OF THE SENTIMENT MEN OUGHT TO INSPIRE.

THERE is no such being as a misanthrope. The men designated by this name, may be divided into many classes. In one class I see men of philosophic minds, revolted by our vices, or shocked by our contradictions, who censure these universal traits with a blunt frankness. Their disgust springs from the evils which the universal follies of the age have shed upon our career. But if they really hated men, would they wield the pen of satire in striving to correct them?

Another class consists of those unfortunate beings who hope to find peace only in solitude. They fly a world which has pierced their heart with cruel wounds; and, perhaps, avow, in words, an implacable hatred towards men. But their sensibility belies their avowal; and we soothe their griefs as soon as we ask their services. Finally, there are those who strive only to render themselves singular, who are really less afflicted than whimsical; rather officious than observing. These would tire us with the avowal of their love of mankind,

if they did not deem that they render themselves more piquant and original, by declaring that they hate them.

We may excuse indignation towards prejudices, contradictions, and vices. But how can man have merited hatred or contempt? Man is good. Such is his primitive character, which he can never entirely efface. Good, but seduced, erring and unhappy, he has claims upon our most tender interest.

I do not propose to vex the question, whether man is born good? I consider him to be born without either virtue or vice. But as he advances in life, nature arranges every thing around him in such a manner, as ought to render him good. A mother is the first object that offers to his view. The first words which he hears, express the tenderest affection. Caresses inspire his first sentiments; and his first occupations are sports.

Too soon, it is true, very different objects surround him. As he grows into life, he is struck with such a general spectacle of injustice, as reverses his ideas, and sours his character. But, although the contagion reaches him, and the passions and prejudices degrade him, some traits of his primitive goodness will always remain in his heart.

Even those terrible enthusiasts who thrust themselves forward in the effervescence of party, who, to give triumph to their cause, blow up the incipient flame of civil discord, and with an unshrinking hand raise the sword of proscription, these fanatics may be strangers to every humane sentiment. Yet many of them are seen to love their wives and children with tenderness, and to preserve in the bosom of their

family, so to speak, the germs of innocence. Robbers, the horror of society, whom the gibbet claims, honour themselves with some acts of humanity; and tyrants have their days of clemency.

During great calamities, natural sentiments develop themselves, and form a touching contrast with the scenes of horror with which they are surrounded. When a destructive conflagration is sweeping along a city, there are no distinctions, no animosities among the wretched sufferers whom the same terror pursues. Enemies forget their hatred, and partisans their parties. The rich and poor cry out together. All love and aid each other. Misfortune has broken down the separating barriers of pride and prejudice, and they find each other good and equal.

Even upon the theatre of war, where the spectacle of destruction excites an appetite to destroy, we often discover affecting traces of humanity. At the siege of Mentz, in 1795, I remember, that the advanced guards of the attack on the left, occupied an English garden near the village of Montback. The garden was completely destroyed. The walks and labyrinths were changed, by the trampling of the soldiers, into high roads. Batteries were raised upon the mounds, from distance to distance, around which still grew rare trees and shrubs. The French bivouacs banished the verdure of the bowling greens; and, in advance of them, a half overturned kiosk served for the front guard of the Austrians. The nearest water was on their side; the nearest wood on the side of the French. To obtain water, the French threw their canteens to the Austrians, who filled them and sent them back.

again. When night drew on, the French soldiers, in return, cut wood for the Austrians, and dragged fagots between the videttes of the two armies. Thus, waiting the signal to cut each other's throat, the advance guards lived in peace, and made exchanges like those between friendly people. This spectacle excited in me a profound emotion ; and I was scarcely able to refrain from tears, in seeing men, so situated, still good, on a soil red with blood.<sup>24</sup>

This primitive goodness is not the only beautiful trait which is continually developing to our view in human nature. For men to be generous and magnanimous, the soul never entirely loses the elevation which it received from its author.

Under oppression, in degradation, in slavery, men still preserve some impress of their first dignity. Those outrages which inflict personal humiliation, are among the most frequent causes of revolutions ; and, perhaps, tyrants incur less danger in shedding the blood of citizens, than in insulting them. An outrage upon a woman was the signal of the liberty of Rome. A similar crime drew on the fall of the Pisistrati, who had found no obstacle in overturning the laws of their country. The Swiss and Danes supported the rigours of a tyrannic yoke in silence. They arose the first day in which their oppressors exacted of them an act of degradation. Genoa had been conquered. An Austrian officer struck a man of the lower class. The indignant Genoese flew to arms, and drove away their conquerors.

Under the most absolute despotism, we sometimes see the subjects preserving magnanimous sentiments ;

and not being able to give them a useful direction, put forth, to serve their master, a courage equal to that with which free citizens honour themselves in serving their country. Of this I might cite striking proofs from the history of even barbarous nations.

A convincing demonstration that an innate principle of elevation exists in the soul, results from the universality of religious ideas. Man is discouraged by his errors, his infirmities, and faults, in vain. An interior voice admonishes him of his high destination. Transient as he is, and comparatively lost in the immensity of the universe, he invokes the Divinity to sanctify the union of his espousals, and to preside over the birth of his infants. He raises his voice to him over the tombs of his fathers. When the contemplation of the works of the Eternal has inspired him with humble sentiments of himself, he still deems himself superior to all the beings that surround him. Occupying but a point on the globe, his disquieting thoughts embrace the universe. He beholds time devouring the objects of his affections, crumbling monuments, and overturning even the works of nature. From the midst of the ruins he aspires to immortality.<sup>24</sup>

What would not these sentiments, at once elevated and good, these precious germs, produce, were they developed by happy circumstances! That they exist in the human bosom, is a sufficient indication that we owe a tender interest to the being who possesses them. Let us love our kind, and cultivate the virtues which render us worthy of their affection.

## LETTER XIII.

## OF SOME OF THE VIRTUES.

PLACED in the midst of men, the most useful virtue is indulgence. To allow ourselves to become severe, is, to forget how many good qualities we want ourselves; and from what faults we are preserved only by chance and our circumstances. It is to forget the weakness of men, and the empire exercised over them by the objects that surround them. To render exact justice to our kind, we ought to take into the estimate all the assistance and all the obstacles with which they have met in their career. Thus weighing them, celebrated actions will become less astonishing, and faults begin to appear excusable.

By cultivating the spirit of indulgence, we learn the happy secret of being well with ourselves, and well with men. Some carry into their intercourse with the world an austere frankness. They are dreaded; and the opposition which they every day experience, increases their disagreeable and tiresome roughness, and their officious rudeness. Others, blushing at no complaisance, and equally supple and false, smile at what displeases them; praise what they feel to be ridiculous; and applaud what they know to be vile. Be indulgent, and you will not sacrifice self-esteem; and your frankness, far from annoying, will render your affability more amiable.

The less we occupy ourselves with the vices and aberrations of men, the more pleasant does existence

become. Indulgence carries its own recompense with it, and causes us to see our kind almost such as they should be.

Let us extend a courageous indulgence towards those unfortunate beings who are victims of long-continued errors. Enough will be ready to assume the office of their accusers. Let us draw round them the veil of charity. I am aware that gloomy moralists will object to these views, and call them easy principles that encourage the vices, flatter the passions, and excuse disorders. Believe me, the most easy and successful mode of reclaiming the wandering, is, to carry encouragement and hope to their hearts, and to have faith in their repentance.<sup>25</sup>

Born in an age when every one professes to applaud toleration, far from adopting the real spirit, we scarcely know how to practise indulgence even towards abstract opinions that differ from our own. Let us never forget the weakness and error of our own judgment and understanding, and then we shall possess an habitual temper of candour towards the views of others. In most instances, when we say "that man thinks rightly," the phrase, when translated, imports, "that man thinks as I do."

Let us never forget, that chance may have given us the opinions most dear to us. The ardent patron of this party, had he only been in a house contiguous to his own, would have had opinions and prejudices the exact reverse of those he now reveres. It is not improbable that he might have died in the opposite ranks.

A particular idea, which you formerly deemed correct, at present seems false. Perhaps you may one

day return to your first judgment. Let us accord to our antagonist a right which we frequently exercise for ourselves, the right to be deceived. During the contests of party, I have more than once seen the spectacle of two men changing their principles almost at the same moment, in such a manner, that one of them takes the place of the other in the faction, which, but a short time since, he professed to detest. Taking human nature as it is, into view, this does not astonish me. What I find strange, is, that these two men should hate each other more than ever, and that it has become impossible to reconcile them, now that the one has espoused the opinion which the other held but a moment before.<sup>26</sup>

An essential truth that ought to be constantly announced, is, that both political and religious opinions have much less influence than is commonly imagined upon the qualities of the heart. No verity has been so completely demonstrated to my conviction. I have been conversant with men of all parties. In every one I have met with persons full of disinterestedness and integrity. To esteem them, it was only necessary to remark the noble and unshrinking courage with which they were willing to suspend every thing on the issue of their convictions.<sup>27</sup>

A crowd of useful reflections upon this subject naturally offer, upon which it would be easy to enlarge.—The brevity of my plan impels me to other subjects. There is one quality difficult to define, yet easily understood, which always affects us pleasantly. It is a quality as rare as its effects are useful; and yet we have scarcely a specific term in our language by which

fully to designate it. An obliging disposition is the common phrase that conveys it. Examine all the pleasant things of life, and you will find this disposition the pleasantest of all. There often remains no memory of the benefits received. Of those we have rendered, something is always retained.

But what shall we say of the ungrateful? We are told that they are formidable from their numbers and boldness, and that they people the whole earth. How eccentric and contradictory are the common maxims of the world! We admit that we have a right to exact gratitude; and yet wish that benefits should be forgotten: I hold it wrong to depend upon gratitude, since the expectation will generally be deceived.—On the contrary, I approve his course who keeps an exact account of his good actions. In reading the record, he will one day taste a legitimate reward. What reading can be so useful? To remember that we have done good in time past, is to bind us to beneficence in time to come. We hear it continually repeated, that it requires a sublime effort to do good to our enemies. Men more zealous than enlightened, have advanced, that the morality of the gospel has alone prescribed the rendering of good for evil. Evangelical duty is sufficiently elevated, by being founded on the basis of higher sanctions, and a future retribution; and rests not its claims upon new discoveries of what is true, beautiful, and obligatory in morals. They who advocate, that the grand maxims of evangelical morality are found no where else than in the gospel, seem to me to have committed two faults; the one in advancing an error, the other in tending to estrange men from

the virtues they inculcate, by intimating that their practice exacts more than human power.

A writer of unquestionable piety, the late Sir William Jones, found the grand maxim, "Do unto others as you would wish them to do unto you," implied, in the discourses of Lysias, Thales, and Pittacus, and, word for word, in the original of Confucius. The obligation *to render good for evil*, he affirms, is inculcated in the religious books of the Hindoos and Arabians; in confirmation of which, he cites many passages from them. The sentiment of moralists has every where been graven upon the human heart. It is enough that our Lord has sanctioned the sublime precepts that belong to our faith, with immortal recompenses; and still more may we rely upon those sanctions, when we add to them the present pleasure of performing good actions.<sup>27</sup>

Let us add, that, in enjoining the gospel maxim, *to render good for evil*, we inculcate elevation of mind, the source of all the virtues. But christian moralists have too often been tempted to neutralize or destroy the effect of their precepts, by pushing them to absurd or impracticable lengths. To practise forgiveness, and to do good, are evangelical commands, as sublime as they are conformable to our natural views of duty. To enjoin upon us to degrade ourselves in the estimate of our enemies, by feeling and acting towards them as though they were our friends, as some have understood the bearing of the christian precept, would be injurious and impracticable. Socrates pardoned his enemies, but preserved an imposing dignity. There was no abasement in the infinitely higher example of

him who, suffering on the cross, prayed for his murderers.

If such are our obligations as men and Christians, towards our enemies, what duties ought we not to fulfil to those benefactors who have steadily sought occasions to be useful to us, to ward off danger from us, and to repair our misfortunes? To such let us seek incessant opportunities of acquitting our debt. Gratitude will prolong the pleasure conferred by their benefits.

Indulgence, and the desire to oblige, seem to me the two principal means of conciliating to ourselves the affections of our kind. A virtue which, at least, commands their esteem is integrity. Not only is he who practises it faithful to his engagements, since he allows no promises of his to be held slight; but his uprightness makes itself felt in all his actions, and frankness in all his conversation. The faults that he commits he is prompt to acknowledge; he confesses them without false shame, and seeks neither to exaggerate nor extenuate them. Touching the interests which are common to him and other people, he decides for simple justice; and, in so awarding, does not deem that he injures himself, his first possession being his own self-respect. Without rendering me high services, he obliges me in the lesser charities, and procures me one of the most vivid pleasures I can taste, that of contemplating a noble character.

Among the virtues which ought to secure a kind regard, we universally assign to modesty a high rank. A simple and modest man lives unknown, until a moment, which he could not have foreseen, reveals his

estimable qualities and his generous actions. I compare him to the concealed flower springing from an humble stem, which escapes the view, and is discovered only by its perfume. Pride quickly fixes the eye, and he who is always his own eulogist, dispenses every other person from the obligation to praise him. A truly modest man, emerging from his transient obscurity, will obtain those delightful praises which the heart awards without effort. His superiority, far from being importunate, will become attractive. Modesty gives to talents and virtues the same charm which chastity adds to beauty.

Let us carry into the world neither curiosity nor indiscretion. Curiosity is the defect of a little mind, which, not knowing how to employ itself at home, feels the necessity of being amused with the occupations of others. In relation to minute objects it is ridiculous. In important affairs it becomes odious. Let us know nothing about those debates, piques, and parties, which it is not in our power to settle.

An attribute so precious, that, in my eye, it becomes a virtue, is, a gentle and constant equality of temper. To sustain it, not only exacts a pure mind, but a vigour of understanding which resists the petty vexations and fleeting contrarieties which a multitude of objects and events are continually bringing. What an unalterable charm does it give to the society of the man who possesses it! How is it possible to avoid loving him whom we are certain always to find with serenity on his brow, and a smile on his countenance?

I foresee that our brilliant observers, as they run over these precepts, will say to me, "You resemble

those philosophers who trace the plan of a republic, without taking into the account the passions of men, or the state of society ; a thousand times more unreasonable than those writers of romance who publish their dreams as dreams. Your maxims upon indulgence will only awaken for you the pity due to good-natured weakness. The maxim of the world is, be adroit to seize upon defects, and prompt to censure the weaknesses of men, that you may intimidate those who can only serve to annoy you ; and give up to ridicule those who can only amuse you. Make a display of your desire to oblige. Pronounce sentimental phrases with grace. Make dupes if you can ; but take care that you do not become one yourself, by having your own maxims practised upon you. Credit is not revenue, but a sum which becomes exhausted in proportion as you spend upon it, without replacing it. Ought I to be modest when so many examples prove that talents are a small thing, if there be not subjoined the happy talent of making them known. The man who speaks of himself with modesty, is believed upon his word ; and when I search for the causes of that admiration which certain personages have obtained, I can discover no other than the long obstinacy and persevering intrepidity which they have put in requisition to praise themselves. There are eulogies which men give themselves, of which, as of the calumnies that they wipe out, some traces will always remain. Finally, opinion alone renders our qualities estimable ; and he who, with a view to succeed, should immediately cultivate the tawdry virtues which you celebrate, would be as ridiculous as he who should appear

in society in the costume worn a century ago." They who say this, are as right in their views as I am in mine. If the interest with which our kind inspires us, if our virtues cannot shield us from injustice, let us hold ourselves aloof from opinion, and while we allow the multitude their way of thinking, let it not disturb our repose. Among the circumstances essential to felicity, I count the attachment of some individuals, but not popularity.

---

## LETTER XIV.

## OF MARRIAGE.

SINCE we cannot assure ourselves of the general affection, nor even of the justice of men, it becomes our interest, in the midst of the great mass, that we cannot move, to create a little world which we can arrange at the disposal of our reason and affections.

In this retreat, dictated to us alike by our instincts and our hearts, let us forget the chimeras which the crowd pursue; and if the men of fashion, and the world stare, ridicule, and even condemn us, let their murmurs sound in our ears as the dashing of the waves on the distant shore, to the stranger under the hospitable roof which shelters him from the storm.

The universe of reason and affection must be composed of a single family. Of that universe, a wedded pair must be the centre. A wife is the best and the

only disinterested friend, by the award of nature. She remains such when fortune has scattered all others. How many have been recalled to hope by a virtuous and affectionate wife, when all beside had been lost ! How many, retrieved from utter despondency, have felt, in an ineffable effusion of heart, that conjugal heroism and constancy were an ample indemnity for the deprivation of all other good things ! How many, undeceived by external illusions, have, in this way, been brought home to their real good ! If we wish to see the attributes of conjugal heroism in their purest brilliancy, let us suppose the husband in the last degree of wretchedness. Let us imagine him not only culpable, but so estimated, and an outcast from society. Repentance itself, in the view of candour, has not been available to cloak his faults. She alone, accusing him not, is only prodigal of consolations. Embracing duties as severe as his reverses, she voluntarily shares his captivity or exile. He finds still, on the faithful bosom of innocence, a refuge where remorse becomes appeased ; as in former days the proscribed found, at the foot of the altar, an asylum against the fury of men.

Marriage is generally assumed as a means of increasing credit and fortune, and of assuring success in the world. It should be undertaken as a chief element of happiness in the retirement of domestic repose.<sup>28</sup> I would wish that my disciple, while still in the freshness of youth, might have reason and experience enough to select the beloved person whom he would desire one day to espouse. I would hope, that, captivated with her dawning qualities, and earnestly seeking her hap-

piness, he might win her tenderness, and find his satisfaction in training her to a conformity to his tastes, habits, and character.

The freshness of her docile nature demands his first forming cares. As she advances in life she is moulded to happy changes, adapted to supply his defects. She is reared modest, amiable, instructed, respectable, and respected; one day to govern his family, and direct his house, by diffusing around the domestic domain, order and peace. Let neither romances, metaphysics, pedantry, nor fashion, render a qualification for these important duties, either trifling or vulgar in her view. Still, domestic duties are by no means to occupy all her hours. The time which is not devoted to them will flow quietly on in friendly circles, not numerous, but animated by gaiety, friendship, and the inexplicable pleasures which spring from intercourse with rational society. There are, also, more unimportant duties which we expect her not to neglect. We wish her to occupy some moments at a toilet, where simplicity should be the basis of elegance, and where native tact might develop the graces, and vary, and multiply, if I may so say, the forms of her beauty. In fine, the versatility of her modes of rendering herself agreeable, should increase the chances of always escaping ennui in her presence.

But train women to visit a library as *savans*, and they will be likely to bring from it pedantry without solid instruction; and coquetry without feminine amiability. I would not be understood to question the capability of the female understanding. I am not sure that I would wish the wife of my friend to have been

an author, though some of the most amiable and enlightened women have been such. But I deem, that in their mental constitution, and in the assignment of their lot, providence has designated them to prefer the graces, to erudition ; and that to acquire a wreath of laurels, they must ordinarily relinquish their native crown of roses.<sup>28</sup>

When we see a husband and wife thus united by tenderness, good hearts, and simple tastes, every thing presages for them a delightful futurity. Let them live contented in their retirement. Instead of wishing to blazon, let them conceal their happiness, and exist for each other. Life will become to them the happiest of dreams.

Perhaps the world will say, “ You speak, it may be, of such a wife as you would be understood to possess yourself. But you do not paint marriage in the abstract, while you thus describe happiness as finding a habitation within the domestic walls, and pain and sorrow without : how many people find eternal ennui at home, and respire pleasure only when they have fled their own threshold.” There are few wives so perfect, says La Bruyere, “ as to hinder their husbands from repenting at least once in a day, that they have a wife ; or from envying the happiness of him who has none.”

This sentence, instead of containing a just observation, is only an epigram. In looking round a circle of individuals, ridiculously called the world, we shall find happy family establishments less rare than we imagine. Besides, it would be absurd to count among unhappy unions, all those which are not wholly exempt

from stormy passions. Not only is perfect felicity a chimerical expectation on the earth, but we meet with many people who would be fatigued into ennui, in a perfect calm, and who require a little of the spice of contrariety to season the repast of life. I would not covet their taste; but there are modes of being singular, which, without imparting happiness, procure pleasures. Finally, supposing the number of unhappy marriages to be as immense as is contended, what is the conclusion? The great majority adopting, as maxims of life, principles so different from mine, it would be strange if they obtained such results as I desire.

In these days, the deciding motive with parents, in relation to marriage, is interest; and, what seems to me revolting in the spirit of the age, is, that the young have also learned to calculate. When a man marries simply on a speculation of interest, if he sees his fortune and distinction secured, reign disorder and alienation in his house as they may, he is still happier than he deserves to be.

Our marriages of inclination guaranty happiness no more than our marriages of interest. What results should be anticipated from the blind impulse of appetite? Let there be mutual affection, such as reason can survey with a calm and severe scrutiny. Such love as is painted in romances, is but a fatal fever. It is children alone who believe themselves in love, only when they feel themselves in a delirium. They have imagined that life should be a continual ecstasy; and these indulged dreams of anticipation spoil the reality

of wedded life. I have supposed the husband older than his wife. I have imagined him forming the character of his young, fair, and docile companion ; and that, so to speak, they have become assimilated to each other's tastes and habits. The right combination of reason and love, assures for them, under such circumstances, as much as possible, a futurity of happiness.

I might here speak of the misery of jealousy and infidelity, and the comparative guilt of these vices in the husband and the wife. But these are sources of torment only in unions contracted and sustained by the maxims and the spirit of the world. According to my views, these crimes could not mar the marriages which were undertaken from right motives, and under the approving sanction of severe reason. I therefore pass them by, as not belonging to my subject; and, as supposing that when marriage is the result of wise foresight and regulated choice, and when its duties are discharged from a proper sense of their obligation, such faults cannot occur.

Another cause of disunion springs from the proud temper of some wives. They erroneously and obstinately persuade themselves that fidelity includes all their duty. More than one husband, incessantly tormented by an imperious and capricious wife, feels almost disposed to envy the gentle spouse who sleeps pleasantly under deceitful caresses. As much as an honest man ought to avoid crimes, in order to merit his reputation, and sustain it, ought the highest meed awarded to women to be bestowed, not on those alone

who are chaste, but on those who know how to watch over the happiness of their family by eager attentions and studious cares.

This petulance of temper is commonly supposed to be a conjoined attribute of conjugal fidelity. I have sometimes seen wives both peevish and coquettish, and I cannot imagine a more odious combination. If we despise the man who is rough and slovenly at home, and becomes charming in society, what sentiment does that wife merit who wears out her husband's patience with her arrogance, and puts on seducing graces, and affects sensibility, in the presence of strangers?

I have often heard men who were sensible upon every other subject, express their conviction that the orientals, in excluding their women from all eyes but their own, had established the only reasonable domestic policy. There is no more wit than humanity in this barbarous sentiment, however frequently it is uttered. No one could be in earnest, in wishing to copy, into free institutions, this appalling vestige of slavery. But my inward respect for women, withholds me from flattering them. Authority ought to belong to the husband; and the influence of tenderness, graces, and the charms of constancy, gentleness, and truth, constituting the appropriate female empire, belongs of right to the wife. I take leave to illustrate this phrase. Masculine vigour, and aptitude to contend and resist, clearly indicate that nature has confided authority to man. To dispossess him of it, and control him by a still more irresistible sway, it is necessary that the feeble sex should learn patience, docility, passive courage, and the management of their

appropriate weapons in danger and sorrow, and to become energetic for the endurance of the peaceful cares of the domestic establishment. Man is formed by nature for the calls of active courage ; and woman, for the appalling scenes of pain and affliction, and the agony of the sick and dying bed. In a word, all argument apart, nature has clearly demonstrated to which sex authority belongs.

I discover that the defects of man spring from the tendency of his natural traits, in which force predominates, to run to excess. I see his gentle companion endowed with attributes and qualities naturally tending to temper his defects. The means she has received to reach this end, announce that it is the purpose of nature that she should use them with this view. She has charms which, when rightly applied, none can resist. Her character is a happy compound of sensibility, wisdom, and levity. She has superadded a felicity of address which she owes to her organization, and which the reserve that her education imposes serves to develop. Thus the qualities, and even the imperfections of the two sexes serve to bring them together. It follows, that man should possess authority, and woman influence, for their mutual happiness.

When the wife commands, I cease to behold a respectable married pair. I see a ridiculous tyrant, and a still more ridiculous slave. It is vain to urge that she may be most capable of authority, and that her orders may be conformable to wisdom and justice. They are absurd from the very circumstance that they are orders. The virtues which the husband ought to practise towards his wife, must have their origin in

love, which can only be inspired, and which flies all restraint. In a single position, the wife honours herself in assuming authority. It is when reverses have overwhelmed and desolated her husband, so that, ceasing to sustain her, and changing the natural order, she supports him. Grant that he receives hope as her gift; grant that he is compelled to blush in imitating her example of courage; she aspires to this power no longer than to be able to restore him to the place whence misery had cast him down.<sup>30</sup>

It is a truth that ought not to be contested, that dissatisfied husbands and wives often love each other more than they imagine. Suppose them to believe themselves indifferent, and to seem so; and even on the verge of mutual hate; should one of them fall sick, we see the other inspired with sincere alarms. Suppose them on the eve of separation; when the fatal moment comes, both recoil from the act. Habit almost causes the pains, to which we have been long accustomed, to become cause of regret when they cease. When the two begin mutually to complain of their destiny, I counsel each, instead of wishing to criminate and correct each other, to give each other an example of mutual forbearance and indulgence. It may be, that the cause of their mutual dissatisfaction is unreal; the supposed wrong not intended, the suspicion false. Candour and forgiveness will appease all. The husband may have gone astray only in thought, which is beyond human privilege to fathom. The wife may have minor defects and an unequal temper, without forfeiting much excellence, and many remaining claims to be loved. The morbid influence of ill health and

irresistible temperament, in their powerful action upon the temper, may have been the source whence the faults flowed on either part ; and the mutual wrongs may thus have been, in some sense, independent of the will of the parties. Bound, as they are, in such intimate and almost indissoluble relations, before they give that happiness which they hoped and promised to the winds, let them exhaust their efforts of self-command and mutual indulgence, to bring back deep and true affection.

The purest happiness of earth is, unquestionably, the portion of two beings wisely and fitly united in the bonds of indissoluble confidence and affection. What a touching picture does Madame de Staël present in these lines : “I saw, during my sojourn in England, a man of the highest merit united to a wife worthy of him. One day, as we were walking together, we met some of those people that the English call gipseys, who generally wander about in the woods in the most deplorable condition. I expressed pity for them thus enduring the union of all the physical evils of nature. ‘Had it been necessary,’ said the affectionate husband, pointing to his wife, ‘in order to spend my life with her, that I should have passed thirty years in begging with them, we would still have been happy.’ ‘Yes,’ responded the wife, ‘the happiest of beings.’”

## LETTER XV.

## CHILDREN.

ONE of the happiest days, and, perhaps, the most beautiful of life, is when the birth of a child opens the heart of the parent to emotions, as yet, unknown.<sup>51</sup> Yet what torments are prepared by this epoch ! What painful anxiety, what agonies their sufferings excite ! What terror when we fear for their infant life ! These alarms terminate not with their early age. The inquietude with which their parents watch over their destiny fills every period of their life to their last sigh.

The compensating satisfaction which they bring must be very vivid, since it counterbalances so many sufferings. In order to love them, we have no need to be convinced that they will respond to our cares, and one day repay them. If there be in the human heart one disinterested sentiment, it is parental love. Our tenderness for our children is independent of reflection. We love them because they are our children. Their existence makes a part of ours ; or, rather, is more than ours. All that is either useful or pleasant to them brings us a pure happiness, springing from their health, their gaiety, their amusements.

The chief end which we ought to propose to ourselves, in rearing them, is to train and dispose them so that they may wisely enjoy that existence which is accorded them. Of all the happy influences which can be brought to bear upon their mind and manners,

none is more beneficial than the example of parental gentleness. The good Plutarch most eloquently advanced this doctrine in ancient time. Montaigne, Rousseau, M'Kenzie, and various writers of minor fame among the moderns have reproduced his ideas, and, by their authority, have finally effected a happy revolution in education. I delight to trace the most important ideas thus reproduced by enlightened and noble minds in different ages. It is chiefly by persevering in the system of the influence of gentleness that we may expect an ultimate melioration in the human character and condition.

But scarcely has any such salutary change been effected before minds, either superficial or soured, see only the inconveniences which accompany it; and, instead of evading or correcting them, would return to the point whence they started. We hear people regretting the decline of the severity of ancient education, and maintaining the wisdom of those contrarieties and vexations which children used to experience; "a fitting discipline of preparation," say they, "to prepare them for the sorrows of life." Would they, on the same principle, inflict bruises and contusions to train them to the right endurance of those that carelessness or accident might bring? "It is an advantage," say they, "to put them to an apprenticeship of pain at the period when the sorrow it inflicts is light and transient." This mode of speaking, with many others of similar import, presents a combination of much error with some truth.

The sufferings of childhood seem to us trifling and easy to endure, because time has interposed distance

between them and us ; and we have no fear of ever meeting them again. It does not cease to be a fact, that the child that passes a year under the discipline of the ferule of a severe master is as unhappy as a man deprived a year of his liberty. The latter, in truth, has less reason to complain ; since he ought to find, in the discipline of his reason, and his maturity and force of character, more powerful motives for patient endurance. Parents ! Providence has placed the destiny of your children in your hands. When you thus sacrifice the present to an uncertain future, you ought to have strong proof that you will put at their disposal the means of indemnification. If the sacrifice of the present to the future were indispensable, I would not dissuade from it : but my conviction is, that the best means of preparing them for the future may be found in rendering them as happy as possible for the present. If it should be your severe trial to be deprived of them in their early days, you will, at least, have the consolation of being able to say, "I have rendered them happy during the short time they were confided to me." Strive then, by gentleness, guided by wisdom and authority, to cast the sunshine of enjoyment upon the necessary toils and studies of the morning of their existence.

It is the stern award of nature to bring them sorrows. Our task is to soothe them. I feel an interest when I see the child regret the trinket it has broken, or the bird it has reared. Nature, in this way, gives them the first lessons of pain, and strengthens them to sustain the more bitter losses of maturer days. Let us prudently second the efforts of nature ; and to con-

sole the weeping child, let us not attempt to change the course of these fugitive ideas, nor to efface the vexation by a pleasure. In unavoidable suffering let the dawning courage and reason find strength for endurance. Let us first share the regrets, and gently bring the sufferer to feel the inutility of tears. Let us accustom him not to throw away his strength in useless efforts ; and let us form his mind to bear without a murmur the yoke of necessity. These maxims, I am aware, are directly against the spirit of modern education, which is almost entirely directed towards the views of ambition.

But while I earnestly inculcate gentleness in parental discipline, I would not confound it with weakness. I disapprove that familiarity between parents and children which is unfavourable to subordination. Fashion is likely to introduce an injurious equality into this relation. I see the progress of this dangerous effeminacy with regret. The dress and expenditures which would formerly have supplied ten children, scarcely satisfy at present the caprices of one. This foolish complaisance of parents prepares, for the future husbands and wives, a task most difficult to fulfil. Let us not, by anticipating and preventing the wishes of children, teach them to be indolent in searching for their own pleasures. Their age is fertile in this species of invention. That they may be successful in seizing enjoyment, little more is requisite to be performed on our part than to break their chains.

There are two fruitful sources of torments for children. One is, what the present day denominates politeness. It is revolting to me to see children early

trained to forego their delightful frankness and simplicity, and learn artificial manners. We wish them to become little personages; and we compel them to receive tiresome compliments, and to repeat insignificant formulas of common-place flattery. In this way, politeness, destined to impart amenity to life, becomes a source of vexation and restraint. It would seem as if we thought it so important a matter to teach the usages of society, that they could never be known, unless the study were commenced in infancy. Besides, do we flatter ourselves that we shall be able to teach children the modes and the vocabulary of politeness, without initiating them, at the same time, in the rudiments of falsehood? They are compelled to see that we consider it a trifle. If we wish them to become flatterers, and dishonest, I ask, what more efficient method we could take?

Labour is the second source of their sufferings. I would by no means be understood to dissuade from the assiduous cultivation of habits of industry. You may enable children to remove mountains, if you will contrive to render their task a matter of amusement and interest. The extreme curiosity of children announces an instinctive desire for instruction. But instead of profiting by it, we adopt measures which tend to stifle it. We render their studies tiresome, and then say that the young naturally tire of study.

When the parent is sufficiently enlightened to rear his child himself, instead of plying him with rudimental books, dictionaries, and restraint, let him impart the first instructions by familiar conversation. Ideas advanced in this way, are accommodated to the

comprehension of the pupil, by mutual good feeling, rendered attractive, and brought directly within the embrace of his mind. This instruction leads him to observe, and accustoms him to compare, reflect, and discriminate, offers the sciences under interesting associations, and inspires a natural thirst for instruction. Of all results which education can produce, this is the most useful. A youth of fifteen, trained in this way, will come into possession of more truths, mixed with fewer errors, than much older persons reared in the common way. He will be distinguished by the early maturity of his reason, and by his eagerness to cultivate the sciences, which, instead of producing fatigue or disgust, will every day give birth to new ideas and new pleasures. I am nevertheless little surprised that the scrupulous advocates of the existing routine, should insist that such a method tends to form superficial thinkers. I can only say to these profound panegyrists of the present order of instruction, that the method which I recommend, was that of the Greeks.—Their philosophers taught while walking in the shade of the portico or of trees, and were ignorant of the art of rendering study tiresome, and not disposed to throw over it the benefits of constraint. Modern instructors ought, therefore, to find that they were shallow reasoners, and that their poets and artists could have produced only crude and unfinished efforts.<sup>33</sup>

Besides, this part of education is of trifling importance, compared with the paramount obligation to give the pupil robust health, pure morals, and an energetic mind. I deeply regret that the despotic empire of opinion is more powerful than paternal love. Instead

of gravely teaching to your son the little arts of shining in the world, have the courage to say to him, "Oblige those of thy kind whose sufferings thou canst lighten, and exhibit a constant and universal example of good morals. Form every evening projects necessary for enjoying a happy and useful succeeding day." Thus you will see him useful, good, and happy, if not great in the world's estimation. You will behold him peacefully descending the current of time. In striking the balance with life, he will be able to say, I have known only those sufferings which no wisdom could evade, and no efforts repel. But such are the prejudices of the age, to give such counsels to a son, requires rare and heroic courage.

Is not that filial ingratitude, of which parents so generally complain, the bitter fruit of their own training?—You fill their hearts with mercenary passions, and with measureless ambition. You break the tenderest ties, and send them to distant public schools. Your children, in turn, put your lessons to account, and abandon your importunate and declining age, if you depend on them, to mercenary hands. When they were young, you ridiculed them out of their innocent recklessness, and frankness, and want of wordly wisdom. You vaunted to them that ambition, and those arts of rising, which, put in practice, have steeled their hearts against filial piety, as well as the other affections that belong not to calculation. Since the paramount object of your training was to teach them to shine, and make the most out of every body, you have at least a right to expect from their vanity, pompous funeral solemnities. I revere that indication of infinite wisdom that

has rendered the love of the parent more anxious and tender than that of the child. The intensity of the affections ought to be proportionate to the wants of the beings that excite them. But ingratitude is not in nature. Better training would have produced other manners. In rearing our children with more enlightened care, in inspiring them with moderate desires, in reducing their eagerness for brilliancy and distinction, we shall render them happy, without stifling their natural filial sentiments ; and we shall thus use the best means of training them to sustain and soothe our last moments, as we embellished their first days.<sup>34</sup>

---

## LETTER XVI.

### OF FRIENDSHIP.

LET us bring within the family circle, a few persons of amiable manners and simple tastes. Our domestic retreat may then become our universe. But we must search for real friends with capabilities for continuing such. If interest and pleasure break the accidental ties of a day, shall friendship, which was always a stranger to the connexion, be accused of the infraction?

A real friend must not be expected from the common ties of vulgar interest, but must be, in the circle to which he belongs, as a brother of adoption. So simple should be our confidence in the entireness of his affection, and the disinterestedness and wisdom of his ad-

vice, as to incline us to consult him without afflicting our wife or children by a useless communication of our perplexities. To him we should be able to confide our fears ; and while we struggle, by his advice and aid, to escape the pressing evil which menaces to overwhelm us, our family may still repose in tranquil security.<sup>35</sup>

If he suffer in turn, we share his pains. If he have pleasures, we reciprocally enjoy them. If either party experience reverses, instead of finding himself alone in misery, he receives consolation so touching and tender, that he ceases to complain of a lot which has enabled him to become acquainted with the depth of the resources of friendship.

How pure is the sentiment, how simple the pleasures which flow from the intercourse of two men united by similar opinions and like desires, who have both cultivated letters, the arts, and true wisdom ! With what rapidity the moments of these charming conversations fly ! Even the hours consecrated to study, are less pleasant, perhaps less instructive. Such a friend, so to speak, is of a different nature from that of the rest of men. They either conceal our defects, or cause us to see them from motives of ill feeling. A friend so discusses them in our presence, as not to wound us. He kindly reproaches us with faults, to our face, which he extenuates, or excuses before others in our absence. We can never fully comprehend to what extent a friend may be useful and dear, until after having been a long time the faithful companion of his good and evil fortune. What emotions we experience in giving ourselves up to the remembrance of

the common perils, storms, and trials we have experienced together ! It is never without tenderness of heart that we say, “ We have had the same thoughts, affections, and hopes. Such an event penetrated us with common joy; such another filled us with grief. Uniting our efforts, we rescued a victim of poverty and misfortune. We mutually shared his tears of gratitude. The hard necessity of circumstances separated us; and our path so diverged, that seas and mountains divided us. But we still remained present to each other, in communion of thought. He had fears for me, and I for him, as we foresaw each other's dangers. I learned his condition, interpreted his thoughts and feelings, and said ‘ Such a fear agitates him ; he forms such a project, conceives such a hope.’ Finally, we met again. What charms, what effusion of heart in the union !”

It is a puerile absurdity to be proud of the reputation of one to whom we are united by the ties of blood—a distinction which nature gave us. But we may be justly proud of the rare qualities of our friend. The ties of this relation are not the work of nature or contingency. We prove, that, in meriting his esteem, we at least resemble him in the qualities of his heart,

I immediately form a high opinion of the man whom I hear earnest in the applause of the talents or virtues of his friend. He possesses the qualities which he applauds, since he has need to affirm their existence in the person he loves.

This noble and pure sentiment has had its peaceable heroes. What names, what examples could I not cite in ancient and in modern times ! What splendid and

affecting proofs of identity of fortune, joys, and sorrows, and even danger and death! I knew two friends, of whom every one spoke with respect. One of them was asked the extent of his fortune? "Mine is small," he replied, "but my friend is rich." The other, a few days before he died of a contagious disease, asked, "Why so many persons were allowed to enter his chamber? No one," he added, "ought to be admitted but my friend." Thus were they one in fortune, in life, and in death.<sup>36</sup>

I deem, that even moralists have sought to render this peaceable sentiment, this gentle affection, and the only one exempt from storm, too exclusive. I am aware how much our affections become enfeebled, in proportion as their objects multiply. There is force in the quaint expression of an old author, "Love is like a large stream which bears heavy laden boats. Divide it into many channels, and they run aground." Still we may give the honoured name of friend, to several, without profaning it, if there exist between us mutual sympathy, high esteem, and tender interest; if our pleasures and pains are, in some sense, common stock, and we are reciprocally capable of a sincere devotion to each other's welfare. As much, however, as I revere the real sentiment, I am disgusted by the sickly or exaggerated affectation of it.

The sentiment is still more delightful when inspired by a woman. I shall be asked, if it can exist in its purity between persons of the different sexes? I answer in the affirmative, when the impulses of youth no longer agitate the heart. We then experience the whole charm of the sentiment, as the difference of sex,

which is never entirely forgotten, imparts to it a vague and touching tenderness, and an ideal delight for which language is too poor to furnish terms.

Why can love and friendship, the sunshine of existence, decay in the heart? Why are they not eternal? But since it is not so, if we are cruelly deceived in our affections, the surest means of medicating our pain, is, instead of cherishing misanthropic distrust, to look round and form the same generous ties anew. Has your friend abandoned you? or worse, has your wife become unworthy of your love? It is better to be deceived a thousand times, than to add to the grief of wounded affection, the insupportable burden of general distrust, misanthropy, and hatred. Let these baneful feelings never usurp the place of those sentiments which must constitute human happiness. Pardon to those by whom you have been loved, the sorrows which their abandonment has caused you, in consideration of those days of the past which was embellished by their friendship.

But these treasons and perfidies are only frequent in the intercourse of those who are driven about by the whirlwinds of life, in which so many opposing interests, so many deceitful pleasures confuse and separate men. The simple minded and good, whose days flow pleasantly in retreat, every day value more the price of those ties that unite them. Their happiness is veiled and guarantied by a guardian obscurity.

I give place to none of the illusions of inexperience, in regard to men.<sup>37</sup> The errors, contradictions, and vices with which they are charged, exist. I admit that the greater part of satires are faithful paintings.

But there are still to be found every where, persons whose manners are frank, whose heart is good, and whose temper amiable. These persons exist in sufficient numbers to compose this new world of which I have spoken. Writers are disposed to declaim against men. I have never ceased to feel good-will towards my kind. I have chosen only to withdraw from the multitude, in order to select my position in the centre of a small society. For me there are no longer stupid or wicked people on the earth.

I have examined the essential things of life, tranquillity and independence of mind, health, competence, and the affection of some of our kind. I wish now to give my observations something more of detail and diversity. But I wish it still to be borne in mind, that I give only the materials and outlines of an essay, and make no pretensions to fill out a complete treatise. I wish that a temple may be raised to happiness. Hands more skilful than mine will rear it. It is sufficient to my purpose to indicate those delightful sites, in the midst of which it may be erected.

---

## LETTER XVII.

### THE PLEASURES OF THE SENSES.

NATURE has decreed that each one of our senses should be a source of pleasure. But if we seek our enjoyment only in physical sensations, the same stern arbiter has enacted, that our capability of pleasure

should soon be exhausted, and that, palled and disgusted, we should die without having known true happiness.<sup>38</sup>

Exactly in proportion as pleasures are less associated with the mind, their power to give us any permanent satisfaction is diminished. On the contrary, they become vivid and durable, precisely in the degree in which they awaken and call forth moral ideas. They become celestial, when they connect the past with the present, the present with the future, and the whole with heaven.

In proportion as we scrutinize the pleasures of the senses, we shall always find their charm increasing in the same degree as losing, if I may so say, their physical stain, they rise in the scale of purification, and become transformed, in some sense, to the dignity of moral enjoyments.

I look at a painting: it represents an old man, a child, a woman giving alms, and a soldier whose attitude expresses astonishment. I admire the fidelity, the truth, and colouring of the picture; and my eye is intensely gratified. But remaining ignorant of the subject, I go away, and the whole shortly vanishes from my memory. I see it again, and am now struck with the inscription at the bottom, "*Date obolum Belisario.*" I remember an interesting passage of history. A crowd of moral images throng upon my spirit: I soften to tenderness; and I comprehend the affecting lesson which the artist is giving me. I review the painting again and again; and thrill at the view of the blind warrior, and of the child holding out his helmet to receive alms.

When we travel, those points of view in the landscape which long fix our eye, are those which awaken ideas of innocence and peace ; affecting the heart with associations connected with the morning of our life ; or ideas of that power and immensity which move and elevate the soul. The paintings of nature, as well as those of men, are thus capable of being embellished by moral associations. In travelling, I perceive a delightful isle embosomed in a peaceful lake. While I contemplate it with the simple pleasure excited by a charming landscape, I am told that it is inhabited by a happy pair who were long crossed and separated, but who wore out the persevering opposition of fortune, and are now living there in the innocence and peace of the first tenants of paradise. How different an interest the landscape now assumes ! I behold the happy pair, without care or regret, sheltered from jealous observation, enjoying the dream of their happy love, gratefully contemplating the Author of the beautiful nature around them, and elevating their love and their hearts, as a sacrifice to HIM.

Sites which, in themselves, have no peculiar charm, become most beautiful as soon as they awaken touching remembrances. Suppose yourself cast, by misfortune, on the care of a stranger in a strange land. He attempts to dispel your dejection, and says, " These countries are hospitable, and nature here puts forth all her opulence ; come, and enjoy it with us." The gay landscapes which spread before you, all assume the appearance of strangers, and offer no attractions. But while your eye traverses the scenery with indifference, you see blue hills melting into the distant horizon.

No person remarks them but yourself. They resemble the mountains of your own country, the scenes upon which your infant view first rested. You turn away to conceal the new emotions, and your eyes are filling with tears. You continue to gaze fondly on those hills dear to memory. In the midst of a rich landscape, they are all that interests you. You return to review them every day, and demand of them their treasured remembrances and illusions,—the dearest pleasures of your exile.<sup>39</sup>

All the senses would offer me examples in illustration of this idea. Deprive the pleasures of physical love, of moral associations which touch the heart, and you take from it all that elevates the enjoyment above that of the lowest animals. Else, why do modesty, innocence, the expression of unstained chastity, and the graces of simplicity possess such enchanting attractions? The truth, that there exists in love a charm stronger than physical impulse, is not unknown even to women of abandoned manners. The most dangerous of all those in this unhappy class, are they who, not relying on their beauty, feign still to possess, or deeply to regret those virtues which they have really cast away.

There are useful duties upon this subject which I should find it difficult to present in our language. In proportion as the manners of a people reach the extreme refinement of artifice and corruption, their words become chaste. It is a final and steril homage rendered to modesty.

The last delights which imagination can add to the pleasures of love, are not to be sought in those vile

places where libertinism is an art. We must imagine the first wedded days of a young and innocent pair, whose spirits are blended in real affection, in similar tastes, pursuits, and hopes, who realize those vague images which they had scarcely allowed before to float across their mind.

They who seek in the pleasures of taste only physical sensations, degrade their minds, and finish their useless existence in infirmity and brutal degradation. The pleasures of taste should only serve to render the other enjoyments more vivid, the imagination more brilliant, and the pursuits of life more easy and pleasant.—All objects should present themselves under a gay aspect. A happy veil should shroud those pains which have been, or are to be endured. Even the wine-cup, more powerful than the waters of Lethe, should not only procure forgetfulness of the past, but embellishment of the future.

The pleasures derived from odours are only vivid when they impart to the mind a fleeting and vague exaltation. If the orientals indulge a passion for respiration perfumes, it is not solely to procure pleasurable physical sensations. An embalmed atmosphere exalts the senses, and disposes the mind to pleasant reverie, and paints dreams of paradise upon the indolent imagination.

Were I disposed to present the details of a system upon this subject, the sense of hearing would offer me a crowd of examples. The brilliant and varied accents of the nightingale are ravishing. But what a difference between hearing the melody from a cage, and listening

to the song at the noon of night, when a cool and pure air refreshes the lassitude of the burning day, and we behold objects by the light of the moon, and hear the strains of the solitary bird poured from her free bower!

A symphony, the sounds of which only delight the ear, would soon become wearying. If it have no other determinate expression, it ought, at least, to inspire reverie, and produce an effect not unlike that of perfumes upon the orientals.

Suppose we have been at an opera got up with all the luxury of art. Emotions of delight and astonishment rapidly succeed each other, and we believe it impossible to experience new sensations of pleasure. In returning home, we chance to hear in the distance, through the stillness of night, a well-remembered song of our infancy, that was sung to us by some one dear to our memory. It is at once a music exciting more profound emotion, than all the strains of art which we so recently thought could not be surpassed. The remembrances of infancy and home rush upon the spirit, and efface the pompous spectacle, and the artificial graces of execution.<sup>39</sup>

Observations to the same effect might be multiplied without end. If you desire pleasures, fertile in happy remembrances; if you wish to preserve elevation of mind, and freshness of imagination, choose, among the pleasures of the senses, only those which associate with moral ideas. Feeble, when separated from the alliance of those ideas, they become fatal when they exclude them. To dare to taste them, is to sacrifice happiness to pleasures which are alike ephemeral and

degrading. It is to resemble him who should strip the tree of its flowers, to enjoy their beauty. He loses the fruits which would have followed, and scarcely casts his eye on the flowers before they have faded.

---

## LETTER XVIII.

## THE PLEASURES OF THE HEART.

THE Creator has put forth in his gifts, a magnificence which should impress our hearts. What variety in those affectionate sentiments, of the delights of which our natures are susceptible! Without going out of the family-circle, I enumerate filial piety, fraternal affection, friendship, love, and parental tenderness. These different sentiments can all coexist in our hearts, and, so far from weakening each other, each tends to give vigour and intensity to the other. No doubt, the need of so many affections and props, attests our feebleness and dependance. But I can scarcely conceive of the happiness which a being, impassible to weaknesses and wants, could find in himself. I am ready to bless that infirmity of our natures, which is the source of such pure pleasures, and such tender affections.

Let us avoid confounding that sensibility which exacts the pleasures of the heart, with that which produces impassioned characters. They differ as essentially as the genial vital warmth from the burning of

a fever. Indolence, objects calculated strongly to strike the imagination, and those maxims which corrupt the understanding, develop a vague and ardent sensibility which sometimes conducts to crime, and always to misery. The other species is approved by reason and preserved by virtue. We owe it to those pure emotions which impart upon earth an indistinct sentiment of the joys of heaven.

There are men, however, who dread genuine sensibility; and, under the conviction that it will multiply their pains, study to eradicate the germs of it from their soul.

Hume was unhappily an unbeliever; but I might easily cite from his life many honourable traits indicative of a good natural disposition. He remarked to a friend who confided to him his secret sorrows, "You entertain an internal enemy, who will always hinder you from being happy. It is your sensibility of heart." "What!" responded his friend, with a kind of terror, "have you not sensibility?" "No. My reason alone speaks, and it declares that it is right to soothe distress."

In listening to this reply of Hume, we are at once struck with the idea, that the greater part of those who adopt his principles, do not pause at the same point with their model. They sink into that heartless class who see all human calamities with a dry eye, provided they have no tendency to abridge their own enjoyments.

Suppose even that they pursue the lessons of the Scotch philosopher to better purpose, and without any emotion, without any impulse of heart, hold out a

succouring hand to those who suffer. This, perhaps, may answer the claims of reason. But the social instinct will always repel that austere morality, which would give to the human heart an unnatural insensibility, and deprive it, if I may so say, of its amiable weakness. I would hardly desire to see a man oppose a courage too stoical to his own miseries. The natural tears which he sheds in extreme affliction, are his guarantee for the sympathy which he will feel for my sorrows.

It is a vile but common maxim, that two conditions are necessary to success in life. The one is, to have a selfish heart. The other, the adage of egotism, is, that to avoid suffering, we must stifle sensibility. I say to these heartless philosophers of the world, that if the only requisite is to avoid suffering, through destitution of feeling, to die is the surest method of all.<sup>40</sup>

The secret of happiness does not consist in avoiding all evils; for, in that case, we must learn to love nothing. If there be a lot on earth worthy of envy, it is that of a man good and tender hearted, who beholds his own creation in the happiness of all who surround him. Let him who would be happy, strive to encircle himself with happy beings. Let the happiness of his family be the incessant object of his thoughts. Let him divine the sorrows, and anticipate the wishes of his friends. Let him inspire the fidelity of affection in his domestics, by pledging to them a comfortable and pleasant old age. Let him, as far as may be, preserve the same servants, and give them all needed succour and counsel. In fine, let the inmates and dependants of the house all respire a calm and

regulated happiness. Let even the domestic animals know, that humanity presides over their condition.

Entertaining such views, it will be easy to see in what light I contemplate those men who take pleasure in witnessing the combats of animals. What man who has a heart can see spectacles equally barbarous and detestable with satisfaction; such as dogs tearing to pieces a bull exhausted with wounds, cocks mangling each other, the encounter of brutal boxers, or of bad boys in the streets, encouraged to the diabolical sport of fighting? These are the true schools of cowardly and savage ferocity, and not of manly courage, as too many have supposed.<sup>41</sup> But it is not my purpose to draw a painting in detail, of the abominations of cruelty, or the pleasures of beneficence, and I resume my rapid and desultory reflections.

To preserve the sentiments of beneficence and sensibility, let us avoid the pride which mars them. Beneficence, in one respect, resembles love. Like that, it courts concealment and the shade.

The most useful direction we can give to beneficence, is, to multiply its gifts as widely as possible. Let us avoid imitating those men who are always fearful of being deceived by those who solicit their pity. In an uncertainty whether or not you ought to extend succour, grant it. It can only expose you to the error that is least subject to repentance.<sup>42</sup>

Offer useful counsels and indulgent consolations. Save from despair the unfortunate victim who groans under the remorse of an unpremeditated fault. Unite him again to society by those cords which his imprudence has broken. Rekindle in him the love of his

kind, by saying to him, “Though you may not recover innocence, repentance can at least restore your virtue.”

If we have access to the opulent and powerful, we have an honourable but difficult task to fulfil. To assume the often thankless office of soliciting frequent favours for friends, without losing the consideration necessary to success, requires peculiar tact, discernment, and dignity.—Above all, it requires disinterested zeal. In attempting this delicate duty in the form of letters, we may soon dissipate our slender fund of credit. Letters of recommendation resemble a paper currency. They are redeemed in specie so long as they are issued discreetly, and in small amounts, but which become worse than blank paper, as soon as we multiply them too far.<sup>43</sup>

Such is the intrinsic attraction of beneficence, that even if we refuse to practise it, we still love whatever retraces its image. A romance affects us. Pathetic scenes soften our hearts at the theatre. In thus embracing the shadow, we pay a sublime testimonial to the substance.

The example of beneficence so readily finds its way to every heart, that we are affected even in thinking of those who practise it. The coldest hearts pay a tribute of veneration to those women, who, in consecrating themselves to the service of the poor and the sick, encounter extreme fatigue, disgust, and often abuse from the wretched objects themselves, in the squalidness and filth of prisons and hospitals. How beautiful to learn to put forth patience to mitigate the maladies of the body, and hope to soothe those of the mind!<sup>44</sup>

Ye who practise virtues thus touching and sublime,  
may well hope the highest recompenses of heaven.  
Such alone are worthy of your pure spirits. Ye seem  
to have passed in light across our dark sphere, only to  
fulfil a transient and celestial mission, to return  
again to your country.

---

## LETTER XIX.

## THE PLEASURES OF THE UNDERSTANDING.

IN the savage man, the intellectual faculties sleep. As soon as his appetites are satisfied, he sees neither pleasures to desire, nor pains to fear. He lies down and sleeps again. This negative happiness would bring desolation to the heart of a civilized man. All his faculties have commenced their development. He experiences a new craving, which occupations, grave or futile, but rapidly changed and renewed, can alone appease. If there occur between them intervals which can be filled neither by remembrances nor by necessary repose, lassitude and ennui intervene, and measure for him the length of these chasms in life, by sadness.

The next enemy to happiness, after vice, is ennui. Some escape it without much seeming calculation. My neighbour every morning turns over twenty gazettes, the state articles of which are copied the one from the other. Economising the pleasure of this reading, and gravely reposing in the intervals, he

communicates, sometimes with an oracular tone, sometimes with a modest reserve, his reflections to those who surround him ; and, at length, leaves the reading room with the importance of one who feels that he has discharged a debt to society.

In public places, it is not the spectacles, but the emotions of the common people who behold them, that are worthy of contemplation. In the murder of a poor tragedy by poorer actors, what transports from this enthusiastic mass of the audience, when a blow of the poniard, preceded by a pompous maxim, lays the tyrant of the piece low ! What earnest feeling, what sincere tears do we witness ! How much more worthy of envy these honest people who lose their enjoyment neither by the revolting improbability of the situations, nor by the absurdity of the dialogue, nor by the mouthing of the rehearsal, than those fastidious critics who exalt their intellectual pride at the expense of these cheap enjoyments !

From the moment in which a man feels sincere pleasure in cultivating his understanding, he may date defiance to the fear of the weight of time. He has the magic key which unlocks the exhaustless treasury of enjoyments. He lives in the age and country which he prefers. Space and time are no longer obstacles to his happiness. He interrogates the wise and good of all ages and all countries ; and his conversations with them cease, or change object, as soon as he chooses. How much gratitude does he owe the author of nature, for having impressed on genius so many different impulses ! With Plato, he is among the sages of Greece, hearing their lessons, and associating his wishes with

theirs for the happiness of his kind.<sup>45</sup> In the range of history, he ascends to the infancy of empires and time. Does he court repose? Horace bids him gather the roses before they fade; or Shakspeare reminds him, when illusions will vanish like the baseless fabric of a vision.

If a man has powers and acquirements, it is a great evil if he is disposed to fatigue others with his self-love. If we could number all the subjects of which the most accomplished scholar is ignorant, we should perceive that the interval between him and a common person is not so immense as he may imagine. Ought he to be astonished if the real friends of the Muses tire of his declamations, his recitations, and occupancy with himself?

To attain truth should be the real end of all study. In such researches the mind kindles, as by enchantment, at every step! The desire to succeed, produces that noble emotion which is always developed by ardent zeal and pure intentions. Success, although we were to think nothing of its results, inspires a kind of pleasure, because truth comports with our understanding, as brilliant and soft colours agree with the eye, or pleasant sounds with the ear. This enjoyment naturally associates with another still more vivid. The effect of truth is universally salutary; and every instance in which our feeble intellect discovers some gleams, elevates the spirit, and intimately penetrates it with a high degree of happiness.

One of the chief advantages of study is, that it franchises the mind from those prejudices that disturb life. How many, and what agonizing torments have

been caused by those which are associated with false ideas of religion.<sup>46</sup> After those great calamities in the dark ages which destroyed the traces of the sciences and arts, men, pursued by terror, seemed to imagine that they constantly saw malevolent spirits flying among the clouds, or wandering in the depth of woods. The sound of strong wind and thunder came to their ear as the voice of infernal divinities ; and, prostrate with terror, they sought to appease their angry gods by bloody sacrifices. In process of time, a small number of men, enlightened by observation, dared to raise the veil by degrees, and succeeded in dissipating these terrors, by tracing the seeming prodigies to some of the simplest laws of physics. The phantoms of superstition vanished, and, in the light of reason, revealed a just and beneficent Divinity presiding over obedient nature.

We think, in our pride, that an immense interval separates us from those times of disaster, ignorance, and alarm. How many of our kind, unhappy by their intellectual weakness, still tremble before the jealous and implacable god of their imaginations, who enjoins hatred and wrath, and punishes even the errors of opinion by the most horrible torments. The man who is exempt from prejudices is alone capable of prostrating himself before the Divinity, from a feeling of love, and whose prayer, alike confident and resigned, is addressed to his noble attributes of power, justice, and clemency.

There are other errors which study dispels. The student who is charmed with communion with the Muses, does not consume his best years in gloomy

intrigues ; nor do you meet him pressing forward in the path which ambition has traced. The Greeks, fertile in significant allegories, supposed the same divinity to preside over the sciences and wisdom.

The habit of living in converse with the noblest works of mind and art, produces elevation of soul ; and he who has an elevated mind must be intrinsically good and happy. Exempt from the weaknesses of vanity, free from the tumultuous passions, he cultivates the noble and generous virtues for the pleasure of practising them. Disdaining a mass of objects of desire, which disturb the vulgar, he offers a small mark to misery. Should adversity strike him, he has resources so much the more sure, as he finds them in himself.

No one can ever taste the full charm of letters and the arts, except in the bosom of retirement. If he reads and meditates only for the pursuit of fame, amusements change to labours. If we propose to enter the lists, outstrip rivals, and direct a party, we are soon agitated with little passions, but great inquietudes. Heaven, sternly decreeing that no earthly felicity shall be unalloyed, has placed a thirst for celebrity, as a drawback upon the love of study.

But ought the ardour to render immortal services—ought the noble ambition to be useful, to be stifled? Are not these the source of pleasures as pure as they are ravishing? I contemplate an immense and indestructible republic, composed of all those men who devote themselves to the happiness of their kind. Occupied without relaxation or abatement, in continuing the works which their predecessors have begun,

they bequeath to their successors the care of pursuing and crowning their labours. Men of genius are the chiefs of this republic. As they have talents which separate them from the rest of the human race ; they have also pleasures reserved for themselves alone. What a sublime sentiment must have elevated the spirit of Newton, when a part of the mysterious laws of the universe first dawned on his mind ! A glow still more delightful must have pervaded the bosom of Fenelon, when meditating the most beautiful lessons which wisdom ever announced to the powerful and the rulers of the people. To these privileged beings it belongs to give a powerful impulse to minds, and to trace a new path for the generations to come.

I shall have attained my humble ambition, if, docile to the voice of the wise, I shall be able, in any degree, to indicate the way in which these lessons may be put in practice. I shall thus have contributed my aid to dissipate the night of prejudice and vice.

---

## LETTER XX.

### THE PLEASURES OF THE IMAGINATION.

IF these words denote pleasures which have no reality, let us no longer use them.<sup>47</sup> The person who, during the twelve hours of every day that he passed in sleep, believed himself clothed with royal anthority, shared a lot exactly similar to the king, who, dreaming

through the same number of hours, imagined that he suffered cold and hunger, and asked the pity of the peasants in the streets.

All our pleasures are fugitive, and they are all real. That wonderful faculty, the imagination, awakens past pleasures, charms the instant that is flowing, and either veils the future, or embellishes it in the radiance of hope.

Let us banish that vulgar prejudice which represents reason and imagination as two enemies which cannot coexist. The severest reason ought to disdain no easy and pure pleasures. The happy paintings even of a dream, bring joy, until their rainbow hues melt away. The dreams of the imagination have greatly the advantage over those of sleep. Our will gives them birth. We prolong, dissipate, and renew them at pleasure.<sup>48</sup> All who have learned to multiply these happy moments, know, at the same time, how to enjoy these agreeable visions, and paint with enchantment those dreamy hours which they owe to the effervescence of a gay imagination.

There are situations in which reason has no better counsel to give us than to yield ourselves up to those illusions which mingle pleasures with our sufferings. I knew a worthy, but unfortunate man, who passed twenty months in prison. He informed me, that every night he had a dream, in which he imagined, that his wife and children visited him and restored him to liberty.<sup>49</sup> This dream left a remembrance so profound, an emotion so delightful, that he determined to attempt to renew it by day. When evening came, exciting his imagination to its most vigorous action, he endeavoured

to persuade himself that the moment of the reunion was come. He represented to himself the transports of his wife, and the caresses of his children ; and he allowed no thought but these delightful visions to occupy his mind, until the moment when sleep once more wrapped him in forgetfulness. The habit of concentrating his imagination for this result, he assured me, finally rendered these illusions incredibly vivid and real. He expected night with impatience ; and the certainty that the close of day would bring some happy moments, threw over the tedious hours an emotion which mitigated his sufferings.

These charming illusions in misfortune, resemble those brilliant boreal lights which, in the midst of a night that lasts for weeks, present the image of dawn, during the dreary winters of the polar circle. An excitable and vivid faculty, which deceives misfortune, ought to embellish happiness. To the pleasant things we possess, it adds those we desire. By its magic we renew the hours of which the memory is dear. We taste the pleasures which a distant future promises ; and see, at least, the fleeting shadow of those which are passing away.

A gloomy philosopher has told us, that such illusions are the effect of a transient insanity. It seems to me that insane thoughts are those which create ennui ; and that reasonable ideas are those which throw innocent charms over life. If you reject these views, be persuaded, at least, not to adopt a false and gloomy wisdom. You ought rather to prefer the conviction that every thing below is folly.<sup>50</sup> But still I can distinguish gay follies, frightful follies, and amiable

follies ; and I easily discover that there is a choice among them.

Why should the morose being who perceives only bad people on the earth, and only miseries in the future, blame him who cradles flattering hopes, always springing up anew, for allowing himself to be beguiled by the illusions of his imagination ? Both deceive themselves. But the one cherishes a mistake which brings hatred and suffering, and the other lives on gaily in his illusions.

Wisdom does not disdain a faculty merely for being brilliant ; and to taste all the pleasures of imagination it is indispensable that reason should be much exercised.

Imagination resembles the magician of an oriental romance who transports his favourite hero to scenes of enchantment, to try him with pleasures, and then delivers him over to a hostile magician, who multiplies peril and misery around him. This creative faculty, in its perversion, is as fertile to invent torments, as, in its more propitious moods, to bring forth pleasures. If once we resign ourselves to its gloomy caprices, it conjures up the terror of a thousand unreal evils. Reason cannot always follow its meteor path, but ought, at least, to point out the course in which happiness invites it to walk.

The aid of reason is still more necessary at the moment when the chimeras of imagination disappear. It is an afflicting moment. Reason should prepare us to meet it. Every man with an elevated mind and a good heart, has delighted to imagine himself far away from the stupid and wicked, in a smiling country,

separated from the rest of the world, and alone with a few friends. Suppose this dream realized; I am aware that to-morrow, the peaceful exile might be indulging regrets for the place he had left; and forming plans to escape from the ennui of the new country. Since we change our destiny in these respects, without altering our instinctive desire of change, let us study the art of softening the pains of our actual condition; and let us learn to extract all possible advantages from it, by imparting to it, if nothing more, the embellishment created by the happy anticipations of a fertile imagination.

Ought we to indulge regrets because these paintings of the imagination so rapidly disappear? I have seen the rich and the great stripped, in a moment, of their fortune and power; and shall I afflict myself because my dream has vanished? These unfortunate people lost all that was dear to them for ever. For me, I can renew these pleasures of imagination at my will.

Far from sacrificing any of our faculties, let us exercise them all; and let them mutually conduce to our happiness. As we advance in life, our reason should grow to the calm of mature age. But let the imagination and the heart still preserve scintillations of the fire of youth.

## LETTER XXI.

## MELANCHOLY.

THERE is no pleasure of earth, but, as soon as it becomes vivid, has a tendency to tinge itself with melancholy. The birth of an infant, the convalescence of a father, the return of a friend who has been long absent, fill the eyes with tears. Nature has thus chosen to mingle the colours of joy and sadness. Having destined us to experience each of the emotions in turn, she has ordained that the shades of transition should melt into each other.<sup>51</sup>

The dearest remembrances are those which are accompanied by tenderness of heart. The sports of infancy, the first loves, the perils we have for ever escaped, and the faults we have learned to repair, are of the number. Whoever will recollect the happiest moments of his life, will find them to have produced this emotion.

But there are two kinds of melancholy; or rather, we must not confound melancholy with gloom. Will the slight tenderness of sorrow, which imparts a new charm to the fugitive pleasures of existence, be inspired by those gloomy books which this age has attempted to bring into fashion; by those terrific and wild dreams, in which hideous personages enact revolting scenes? Modern imagination has painted melancholy a tall and unearthly spectre enveloped in a winding-sheet. The real traits of her countenance are those of innocence occupied in pleasant reverie; and,

at the same time that tears are in her eyes, a smile dwells on her lips.

It is the resort of a steril imagination and a cold heart, to invest even the tomb with borrowed ideas of darkness ; to wait for night in which to visit it ; and to torment the fancy to people it with sinister phantoms. Real sensibility would not require such an effort to be awakened. It fills my mind with a pleasing sadness to wander in the churchyard, under the melancholy radiance of the moon, among monuments of white marble, and hear the night breeze sigh among the weeping willows. I am deeply affected with, here and here, a touching inscription.<sup>52</sup> I remember one in which a father says, that he has had five children, and that here sleeps the last that remained to him for consolation. In another, a father and mother announce that their daughter died at seventeen, a victim of their weak indulgence, and of the extravagant modes of the time. This sojourn of repose, these words written in the abodes of silence, which inspire tenderness for those that are no more, and those whose treasured affection still remembers them, always penetrate the soul with an emotion not without its charms. In the view of tombs, we immediately direct our thoughts to an internal survey of ourselves. I mark out my place among the peaceful mansions. I imagine the vernal grass and flowers reviving over my place of rest. My imagination transports me to the days which I shall not see, and sounds for me the soothing dirge of the adieu of friendship, pronounced over the spot where I am laid.<sup>53</sup>

I generally carry from my sojourn in these our last

mansions, one painful sentiment. I remark that many tombs are raised by parents for their children; by husbands for their wives; by widows for their husbands. I observe, that there are but few erected by children for their fathers. Perhaps it is right that love should ascend in that scale, rather than descend in the other.

Occasional visits to ruins and tombs inspire salutary melancholy. But the habit of frequently contemplating these lugubrious objects is dangerous. It blunts sensibility, and creates the necessity of always requiring strong emotions. It nourishes in the soul sombre ideas which do not associate with happiness. Without doubt, there are those who are so unhappy as to long for the repose of the grave; who find solace in these gloomy spectacles. Young, after having lost his only daughter, after having in vain solicited a little consecrated earth to cover the remains of the youthful victim; after being reduced to the necessity of interring the loved one with his own hands, might be tempted to fly his kind, and love only night, solitude, and tombs. There have been men, condemned by the award of nature, to such reverses as nourish an incurable and perpetual melancholy. Their frigid imitators, without their reason and profound feeling, in wishing to render themselves singular, become tiresome and ridiculous in their melancholy.

Writers of the most splendid genius of the age, have consecrated their talents to celebrate melancholy; not that melancholy which has a smile of profound sensibility, but that which has been cradled in tombs, and which holds out to us the full draught of sadness.

There is something in these heart-rending scenes, these lugubrious spectacles, which the age seeks with avidity. A writer, whose talent tends to render his errors seducing, has taken pleasure in viewing the Christian religion as opening an inexhaustible source of melancholy. It seems to exalt his mind, most of all, when it presents itself to him under a funereal aspect.

He paints religion as born in the forests of Horeb and Sinai, for ever surrounded with a formidable gloom, and offering to our adorations a God who died for men. He describes the invasion of the barbarians, the persecutions of the first believers, cloisters arising from deep and dark groves, and melancholy continually receiving new accessions from the austere rules imposed upon the pious inmates.

“There,” said he, “the tenants of these religious seclusions dug their own tombs by the light of the moon, in the cemeteries of their own cloisters. Their couch was a coffin. Some of them occasionally wandered away to sojourn among the ruins of Memphis and Babylon, striking the chords of the harp of David, surrounded by beasts of prey. Some condemned themselves to perpetual silence. Others sung a continual hymn, echoing the sighs of Job, the lamentations of Jeremiah, or the penitential songs of the prophet king. Their monasteries were built on sites the most savage, on the summits of Lebanon, in the deep forests of Gaul, or on the crags of the British shores. How sad the knell of the religious bells, heard at the noon of night, must have sounded when calling the vestals to their vigils and prayers! The sounds, as they

swelled and died away, mingled the last strains of the hymns with the distant dashing of the waves. How profound must have been the meditations of the solitary, who, from his grated window, indulged in revery, as his eye wandered over the illimitable sea, perhaps agitated with a tempest ! What a contrast between the fury of the waves, and the calm of his retreat ! The expiring cries of men are heard, as they dash upon the rocks at the foot of the asylum of peace. Infinity stretches out on one side of their cell ; and, on the other, the slab of a tomb alone separates between eternity and life. All the different forms of misfortune, remembrance, manners, and the scenes of nature, concurred to render the Christian religion the genius of melancholy.”

Can it be thought, for a moment, possible that sighs without end, the love of deserts, and the hope of the tomb, are all the consolations that this divine religion is calculated to bring to the heart of man ? Such an error could only have had its origin in an unregulated imagination. The Christian religion, though pensive and serious, is not sad. Less brilliant, less imaginative than paganism, less friendly to pleasure, she is far more favourable to happiness.

My opinion, in regard to the legitimate tendency of religion, is not only different, but directly opposite. A pure religion must produce tranquillity, confidence, and joy. It is departure from religious views which are true and just, that is followed by a vague sadness, gloom, and despondency.

These funereal, and yet eloquent paintings, traced with the enthusiasm of melancholy, must have had the

effect to increase the number of men of atrabilious temperament, weary of the world, and tired of themselves. Were it true, that the Christian religion inspired an insatiate craving for funereal reveries, far from considering it as I do—divine, I should estimate it anti-social. The true friends of the Christian religion, always paint it as it is—more powerful than even human misery; giving clothing to the naked, bread to the hungry, an asylum to the sick, a peaceful home to the returning prodigal, and a mother to the orphan; wiping away the tears of innocence with a celestial hand, and filling the eyes of the culpable and contrite with tears of consolation. Let pious thankfulness, and a calm courage, which even death cannot shake, environ its modest heroes. Let its martyrs be those of charity and toleration;—the protestant opening an asylum to catholic, falling under the fanatical fury of his brethren; and when bloody and impious mandates order the massacre of protestants, the catholic sheltering them in his mansion. Such was the spirit of Erasmus; such of the divine Fenelon; such of William Penn, and a few tolerant lights that have gleamed through ages of persecution and darkness. Such are the men whose disciples we desire to multiply. Let us cease to incorporate melancholy errors and gloomy follies with the religion of peace, confidence, and hope. Eloquence was imparted for a nobler use.

## LETTER XXII.

## RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS.

THE philosophy of happiness must find its ultimate requisite in the hopes of religion. Man must be persuaded that his present life has relation to a never ending future, and that an eternal providence watches over the universe, before he will abandon himself with a tranquil confidence to those irresistible laws by which he is borne along. He then marches towards the future, as he would confidently follow a guide of tried prudence and fidelity, in a dark path.<sup>54</sup>

In the fever and tumult of worldly pleasures and pursuits, the voice of wisdom has little chance to be heard; and it seems necessary that misfortune should have forced the mind in upon itself, before we become inclined to find resources in religion. Then we invoke this sublime and consoling power, and like the friend that avoids our prosperity and our festivals, but returns to cheer our misfortunes, this celestial friend is at hand to offer her sustaining succour. We may class all those pleasures as noxious, which will not associate with this august visitant. Even in our periods of happiness, if we pause for the reflection of a moment, we find the need of immortality. All the generous and tender affections acquire a new charm, in alliance with religious ideas, in the same manner as objects, beautiful in themselves, receive a new lustre when a pure light is thrown upon them. Filial piety becomes more touching in those children who pray

with fervour for the preservation of the life of a mother. Let a pious courage guide the sister of charity, and she becomes the angel of consolation, as she visits the abodes of misery. Even virtue itself does not receive its celestial impress, except in alliance with religious sentiments. A few of the higher philosophers among the great ancients, and Fenelon, Newton, Milton, and a few other men of immortal name, saw the Divinity as he is, and contemplated the perfect model of his infinite perfections. Their efforts tended to cooperate with the divine views of order and harmony, in constantly directing human actions and thoughts towards good. The beautiful system of the gospel has the same simplicity of object; and its tendency to honour and meliorate humanity, is directed by the highest wisdom. Sentiments which give to all our faculties a direction, fertilize genius as well as virtue. High models, in any walk of mind, will never be produced in a world whose inhabitants believe in nothing but matter, fortuitous combinations, and the annihilation of our being. Apostles of atheism! your dreary creed throws an impenetrable gloom upon the universe, and dries the source of all high thoughts. The advocates of these views vaunt the necessity of proclaiming the truth. I, too, am the fearless advocate of the truth, and have no dread of its results. But could I be persuaded that religious hopes were unfounded, I should be tempted to renounce my confidence in truth itself; and no longer to inculcate the necessity of loving and seeking to propagate it. It is by the light of this divine torch, that real sages have desired to investigate religion. Were it possible that

the elevated and consoling ideas which religion offers, could be baseless and absurd chimeras, error and truth would be so confounded, that there would no longer remain any discriminating sign by which to distinguish the one from the other. Atheists boast that they are the only frank and hardy antagonists of superstition. They are its most effectual allies. The superstitious have brought forth the atheists, and the atheists have re-produced the superstitious ; as, in revolutions, resistance produces fury, and that multiplies resistance.

I have known excellent men, apparently earnest and docile inquirers for truth, who have desired in vain to establish in their mind these consoling convictions.—Their understanding refused to respond to the wish of their hearts.

Why can I not impart this happy conviction to their understanding ? My subject precludes reasoning, and I only know arguments that are very simple ; but I think with Bacon, that it needs quite as much credulity to adopt the opinion of atheists, as to yield faith to all the reveries of the Talmud or the Koran. The more profoundly I attempt to investigate the doctrines of infidelity, and consider every thing that surrounds me, as resulting from the combinations of chance, the play of atoms, the efforts of brute matter, the more my inquiries are involved in darkness. I strive in vain to give to any hypothesis of atheism, the honest semblance of probability. Matter cannot reflect upon the order which its different parts require. Neither can those parts interchange reason and discussion. Neither an atom, nor a globe can say to others of their class, “ Such are the courses in which we must move.”

Let us simplify difficulties as much as possible, and admit that matter has always existed ; let us even suppose motion essential to it ; a supreme intelligence is none the less necessary to the harmony of the universe. Without a governor of worlds, I can only conceive a nihility or chaos.

From the sublimest of all thoughts, there is a God, flow all the truths which my heart desires. The beautiful superstructure of Christianity, results, as a corollary, or ultimate inference, from this consoling axiom. The system which rejects the soul's immortality, is equally absurd with that of atheism. Of the different arguments against the being of a God, the most striking one is that which is drawn from the evils which prevail on the earth. The first thought of every man of sensibility, is, that had he the power to make a world, he would banish misery from it, and so arrange the order of things, as that existence should be, to all conscious beings, a succession of moments, each marked by happiness. But infirmities, vices, misery, sorrow, and death pursue us. How reconcile the misery of the creation, with the power and beneficence of the Creator ? How resolve this strange problem ? How explain this revolting contradiction ? Immortality is the only solution of the enigma of life.<sup>55</sup>

A whimsical combination of deism and materialism forms, at present, the most widely diffused system among the unbelieving. They have imagined a God possessing only physical power, and contemplating the movement of his innumerable worlds, alike indifferent to crime and virtue. He beholds with the same carelessness the generations that pass, and those that

succeed; and sees deliverers and tyrants alike confounded in their fall. Admit the truth of such dogmas, and the conceptions of a religious man would possess more expansion and sublimity than the views of the Eternal. Socrates, without the illumination of the gospel, could have taught them better. Surrounded by his weeping disciples, he points them beyond the tomb, to the places where the sage at last respires freely; and where the misfortunes and inequalities of earth are redressed. In painting these illusions of hope, [if they are vain, the sage has conceived in his dreams, an equity superior to that of the infinite Being. Let us dare to maintain that the feeble children of clay have a right to entertain ideas of order and desert, more just than those of the Creator, or admit that the heart, made capable of the desire of another life, is destined to enjoy it.

The destiny of all the inferior orders that surround us, appears to terminate upon the earth. Ours alone is evidently not accomplished here. The animals, exempt from vice, incapable of virtue, experience, in ceasing to live, neither hopes nor regrets. They die without the foresight of death. Man, in the course of an agitated life, degrades himself by follies and vices, or honours himself by generous and useful actions. Remembrances, loves, ties, in countless forms, twine about his heart. He is torn, in agony, from beings for whom he has commenced an affection that he feels might be eternal. Persecuted for his virtue, proscribed for his wisdom and courage, calumniated for his most conscientious acts, he turns to heaven a fixed look of confidence and hope. Has he nothing to perform

beyond death? Has the author of nature forgotten his justice, only in completing his most perfect work?

Our immortality is a necessary consequence of the existence of God. Let us not wander astray in vain discussions which, with our present faculties, we can never master—such as relate to the nature of the soul. My hopes, my convictions, rest not upon a cloudy, metaphysical argument. Neither can the proud treatise of a sophist, weaken, nor the puerile dialectics of a pedant increase it. It is enough for me that there is a God. Virtue in misfortune, must have hopes which do not terminate with the tomb. The sublime inculcation of Socrates, was, “Preserve confidence in death.” But recompense in another existence, supposes merit; and merit requires liberty.

Is man free? We can reduce this question which has been so much vexed, and so often obscured, to terms of entire simplicity. It has been most forcibly presented by Hobbes, the vile apostle at once of atheism and despotism, who seems to have striven to unite the most pernicious doctrines with an example which merits execration. “Two objects,” he remarks, “attract us in opposite directions. As long as they produce impressions nearly equal, our mind, in a state of uncertainty, vacillates from the one to the other; and we believe that we are deliberating. Finally, one of the objects strikes us with a stronger impression than the other. We are drawn towards it; and we believe that it is because we will it. Thus, man, always passive, yields to the strongest and most vivid sensation. Free actions would be an effect without a cause.” Admirable reasoning! What other

freedom could I wish, than to prefer what seems to me the most desirable? Let the disciples of Hobbes instruct me how they would choose that man should determine, in order to be conscious of liberty? Would they wish him to choose the object that is repugnant to him? This is too evidently absurd. Should he vacillate in indifference between the one object and the other? This would be to sink into an existence of perfect apathy, without reason or will. Man has all the liberty of which such a being is capable; all, in fact, which he could desire.

How puerile are these metaphysical subtleties, when employed upon moral truths!<sup>56</sup> What a monster would man become on the system of the fatalists! What is that system worth, the consequences of which cannot be admitted? If we act under the inevitable empire of fatalism, why is he who proclaims this doctrine, indignant at the thought of crime? Does he contemplate Socrates and his executioners with the same approbation?—Will he regard with the same feeling Antoninus dictating pious lessons to his son, and Nero assassinating his mother? Will he estimate as alike meritorious a persecuted Christian praying for his enemies, and the monarch ordering the massacre of St. Bartholomew? Do such contrasts offend us? And why? According to the system of fatalism, the good ought to inspire us with less interest than the wicked. A blind fatality awards to the virtuous that pure pleasure that is inseparably connected with good actions. They receive a high reward without any merit; while the others are a prey to remorse, and the incessant object of public hatred and abhorrence. If they are

innocent, as on the principles of fatalism they must be, how ought we to mourn over them, and pity them ! What purpose can these doctrines serve ? He who advocates them, is conscious of impulses to do good, and deliberates upon alternatives in the courses which honour and duty call him to pursue. His principles, then, are contradicted by the voice of his own heart. When he has committed a fault, it declares to him that he might have chosen a contrary part.—When he has done a virtuous action, it inspires emotions of joy, which render him conscious that he is a free agent. This voice within is anterior to all reasoning, and is incapable of being invalidated as any other consciousness. Inexhaustible emotions of satisfaction spring from religious hopes. Reanimated by them, I no longer see tears without consolation, nor fear an eternal adieu.—The tomb, though a fearful, is but a frail barrier, which separates us from those real joys, of which the pleasures of a fugitive existence are but the shadow.

Never would men have exchanged their natural convictions, their internal aspirations, their instinctive hopes of immortality, for the lurid and deceptive glare of infidelity, if religious views had not been disfigured by being combined with the grossest errors and prejudices. Of these, there are two which every good man ought to strive to eradicate from all minds, and if it were possible, to purge from the earth.

The first causes us to behold in the divinity a menacing and implacable judge, constantly eager to execute vengeance. Monstrous conception ! Revolting error ! Infancy and old age, the two extremes of earthly existence, which, from their feebleness, call for our

most soothing cares, are those most persecuted with this vile and fierce prejudice. A cruel superstition has selected these terrific ideas, these horrible images, with which to besiege the bed of death, to light up the scene of agony—of parting and trembling apprehensions—with the flames of perdition. My bosom swells with mingled emotions, when I see any one attempting to darken the feeble and docile reason of a child with these sinister views. Pursued even in his dreams by these terrible menaces, before he knows the meaning of crime, he has already felt its torments. Astonishing infatuation ! It is in this aspect, that gloomy religionists have presented the compassionate and sustaining hope of the gospel. Instead of inspiring sweet and consoling ideas, they have succeeded in filling innocence with remorse.

The other prejudice is intolerance, or that spirit which causes us to view all persons guilty whose faith is different from ours. While religion enjoins it upon us to cover the faults of our kind with a veil of indulgence, intolerance teaches us to transform their opinions into crimes. Religion rears asylums for the unfortunate. Intolerance prepares scaffolds for all whom she chooses to denominate heretics. The one invokes ministers of charity, and the other, executioners. The one wipes away tears, and the other sheds blood.

Intolerance without power is simply ridiculous ; but becomes most odious when armed with authority. The cry of humanity is “ Peace with all men.” If any were excepted, it should be the intolerant. Even they merit no severer punishment, than the inflictions

of their own fury. They may attain to deliverance from remorse in their confident delirium, and may count their crimes as virtues, through the influence of self-blindness. But this strange obliquity of the understanding, this horrible intoxication, repels happiness. Joy and peace must fly the soul of which this spirit has taken possession.

In another life, the measure of our felicity in the mansions of the just, will be the happiness we have created for the beings around us in this fleeting existence. A religious man constantly strives to render this, our terrestrial sojourn, more like the abode towards which his thoughts are elevated. His constant occupation is to mitigate suffering, banish prejudice and hatred, and calm the fury of party. All his relations are those of peace and love. Intolerant men ! Who of your number, will hope to hear it said of him, in the retribution of the just, "Much has been forgiven him, because he has loved much?"

---

### LETTER XXIII.

#### OF THE RAPIDITY OF LIFE.

IN considering the different ages of life, the first sentiment I feel, is gratitude for the variety of pleasures destined for us by nature. Thrice happy for us, if we knew how to taste the charms of all the situations through which we pass ! Instead of this, we

first regret infancy, then youth, then mature age. The happy period is always that which is no more.

It is a great folly to sadden the present, in looking back upon the past, as though it had been darkened by no shadow of a cloud. The sorrows which nature sends us in infancy, resemble spring showers, the traces of which are effaced by a passing breeze. The pains and alarms of each age have been chiefly the work of men. Who cannot remember the violent palpitations which he felt, when, exposed to the searching eye of his companions, he went forward to excuse his not having prepared his task, his translation, or theme at school? I have seen situations more perilous since that time, but no misfortunes have awakened more bitterness, than the preference granted by the professor to the theme of another over mine. The beautiful age, for a frivolous being, is youth; for the ambitious, maturity; for the recluse, old age; for a reasonable man, each age: for heaven has reserved peculiar pleasures for each.

The second sentiment I experience in contemplating life, is, regret to see the moments so rapidly gliding away. Time flies, and days and years steal away as rapidly as hours. Still, some complain of the burden of time, and endure cruel suffering from not knowing how to employ it.

To prolong my days, I will neither ask the elixir of life from alchymists, nor precepts from physicians. A severe regimen tends to abridge life. Multiplied privations give a sadness to the spirit, more noxious than the prescribed remedies are salutary. Besides, what is physical without moral life; that is to say, improve-

ment and enjoyment? Physicians vaunt the miracles of abstinence and a careful regimen in the case of Cornaro, the Venetian, who was born dying, and yet spun out the thread of life with so much care that he vegetated a century. To attain this result, he weighed his aliment, and marked every hour of the day, with the most minute exactness. Bacon cites the case, but jests upon a man who believed himself living, because, in fact, he was not dead.

Moderation, cheerfulness, and the happy employment of time, furnish the best means of living as many days as nature permits; and the regimen of philosophic moralists has an effect more certain than that of physicians.<sup>57</sup>

Every one has observed that a year in youth presents a long perspective; and that the further we advance in our career, the more the course of time seems to accelerate. Let us strive to investigate the causes which so modify our judgments, with a view, if it be possible, to avoid them.

There is one inevitable cause—experience. At sixteen, what an illimitable prospective space is seen in the sixteen years that are to succeed! The termination of the latter period is lost to vision in the future, as the commencement of the first years are effaced from the memory of the past. But, in touching the goal which seemed so distant, we have discovered a scale by which the mind's eye measures the future. Impatient youth, burning to overleap the interval which separates the object from the desires, strives to accelerate the tardy hours. In mature age, on the contrary, seeing every day bringing us nearer the termina-

tion of our career, we begin to regret the want of power to arrest the march of time. Thus our weakness hastens the flight which we desire to delay. Let us be less fearful of the uncertain future, and the hours will lose their desolating swiftness.

Finally, in our youth, all objects being new, produce the vivid impression of novelty. Every instant is filled with landmarks of memory, because in every instant a new sensation is produced, and a new link in the chain of the succession of ideas. As we advance in time, objects imperceptibly cease to excite our curiosity. We pass by beautiful objects and striking events which once filled us with transport or surprise, with a carelessness which fails to fix them in our memory. We return mechanically to the occupations of the preceding day, scarcely noting the transit of those monotonous periods which were rendered remarkable, neither by ennui nor pleasure. Let us avoid this mental carelessness, which gives new speed to the flight of time, and is so fatal to happiness. Friends of humanity, of literature, of the arts and true enjoyment, let us preserve the mind in its freshness, the imagination in its youthful brilliancy. Let us thus arrest the happy moments; and let us preserve the enthusiasm of youth enlightened by the taste of mature age, for everything which merits our admiration.<sup>58</sup>

If we desire that our days should not be abridged, we must love retreat. The immediate result of this shelter is to keep off a crowd of officious and indolent people. There are those who would not think of taking our money, and who yet will steal hours and days from us without scruple. They seem not to realize the value of these fractions of time, which are the material of life.

But while the idle rob us of hours, we ourselves sacrifice years. A great portion of our race, deafened by the clamour of the passions, agitated by feverish dreams, are scarcely conscious of existence; and, awakening for a moment, at death, regret that they have been long on the earth, and yet have not lived. A few others, after having been long swept onward by the torrent, taught at last by experience, resist, land, and fix their sojourn far from the tumult; and, finally, begin to taste the pleasant consciousness of existence. Why not prolong these final hours to the utmost? If our pursuits interdict us from the independent command of our time, we may, at least, consecrate portions of every evening to retreat, in order to review the past, pause on the present, and prepare for the future. Thus, making every day count in accumulating the pleasant stores of memory, we add it to the happy days of the past, and no longer allow life to vanish like a dream.

It is, more than all, in converse with ourselves that we give a right direction to the mind, elevation to the soul, and gentleness and firmness to the character. Life is a book in which we every day read a page. We ought to note down every instructive incident that passes.

The admirable Marcus Aurelius took delight in converse with himself; and learned to find enjoyment in the present, by extracting from the past, lessons for the future. I never fail to be affected when I read the account which he gives of all those persons whose cares had concurred to form his character and his

manners. “ I learned,” says he “ of my grandfather Verus, to be gentle and complaisant.

“ The reputation which my father left, and the memory of his good actions, which has been preserved, taught me modesty. My mother formed me to piety, taught me to be liberal, and not even to meditate, still less to do a wrong.

“ I owe it to my governor that I am patient of labour, indulge few wants, know how to work with my own hands, meddle with no business that does not concern me, and give no encouragement to informers.

“ Diogenes taught me not to be amused with frivolities, to yield no credit to charlatans and enchanters, and to have no faith in conjurations, demons, and superstitions of that sort. I learned of him to permit every one to speak to me with entire freedom, and to apply myself wholly to philosophy.

“ Rusticus made me perceive that I needed to correct my manners, that I ought to avoid the pride of the sophists, and not use effort to inspire the people with admiration of my patience and austerity of life ; to be always ready to pardon those who had offended me, and to receive them kindly whenever they were disposed to resume their former intercourse.

“ I learned of Apollonius to be at the same time frank and firm in my designs, to follow no guide but my reason, even in the smallest matters, and to be always composed, even under the most acute sufferings. By his example I was instructed, that it is possible to be at once severe and gentle.

“ Sextus taught me to govern my house as a good

father, to preserve a simple gravity without affectation, to attempt to divine and anticipate the wishes and necessities of my friends; to endure, with calmness and patience, the ignorant and presumptuous who speak without thinking what they say; and to sustain relations of kindness with all.

“ I learned from Alexander, the grammarian, in disputation, to use no injurious words in reply to my antagonist.

“ Fronto taught me to know that kings are surrounded by the envious, by knaves, and hypocrites.

“ Alexander, the Platonist, instructed me never to say or to write to any person interceding for my interest, ‘ I have had no time to attend to your affairs;’ nor to allege, as an excuse, ‘ I have been overwhelmed with business;’ but to be always prompt to render all those good offices which the bonds of society demand.

“ I owe to my brother Severus, the love which I have for truth and justice. From him I derived the desire to govern my states by equal laws; and to reign in such a manner as that my subjects might possess perfect liberty.

“ I thank the Divinity for having given me virtuous ancestors, a good father, a good mother, a good sister, good preceptors, and good friends; in a word, all the good things I could have desired.”<sup>59</sup>

A crowd of useful thoughts cannot but flow from such self-converse. Hold every day one of these solitary conversations with yourself. This is the way in which to attain the highest relish of existence; and, if I may so say, to cast anchor in the river of life.

## LETTER XXIV.

## ON DEATH.

IF we were to allow ourselves to express the wish that we might never die, an absurd wish, which, perhaps, every man has sometimes indulged, a moralist might say, "Suppose it were granted, where would be the end of dissension, hatred, revenge? Where would the victim whom injustice pursues, find an asylum and repose?" To all this it is sufficient to reply, that if we accuse nature for having subjected us to the penalty of death, we have not less reason to accuse her for having often rendered death desirable, as a relief from greater evils. Instead of showing herself so niggardly in bestowing happy moments, why did she not spare humanity the evils that render death a comparative release.

There are, as I believe, more solid reasons to justify nature in rendering death an inevitable allotment. When, undertaking to reform the universe in my day dreams, I render our earthly existence eternal, I find no difficulty in imagining all the evils which afflict us removed. But I strain my imagination to no purpose, to give form and reality to those pleasures which shall be adequate to replace those which this new order of things cannot admit. Suppose that it were no longer necessary that generation should succeed generation; and that death were banished from the earth. The same beings, without hopes or fears, would always cover its surface. No more loves; no more parental

tenderness; no more filial piety! Flattering hopes forsake the bosom along with enchanting remembrances. All those affections which give value to life, owe their existence to death.<sup>60</sup>

Our prejudices transform death into a terrible spectre, accompanied by frightful dreams. The dark and anti-social doctrine, that we were placed on the earth for the punishment of exile, and that we ought never to intermit our contemplation of the grave, was imagined by hypocrites, who preached to others contempt of the world, that they might appropriate it to themselves. A wise man sees in existence a gift which he ought not to sacrifice. In learning how to live, he instructs himself how to die.

We must sometimes look Death in the face to judge how we shall be able to sustain his approach.<sup>61</sup> It is not necessary often to repeat this stern examination which presents gloomy ideas, even to minds the most disciplined. Another manner of contemplating the final scene, offers all the useful results of the first, and presents nothing afflicting. It consists in observing the influence which death ought to exercise over life. This term, unknown, but always near, should render our duties more sacred, our affections more tender, our pleasures more vivid. In noting the rapidity of the flight of time, a wise man seizes upon those ideas which disturb the hours of the multitude, to enhance the charm of his own thoughts. It was not without an aim that certain of the ancient philosophers placed in their festal hall a death's head decked with roses.

Those who say that death is nothing, may be thought to affect the semblance of courage. They

speak, in fact, only one of the simplest truths. The term, death, is the sign of a purely negative idea ; and denotes an instant impossible for thought to measure. It is not yet death, or it is past ; and there is no interval.

Without doubt, the circumstances which precede it are extremely afflicting. Sudden deaths ought to cost us fewer tears than any others. Yet we hear it repeated, with a sigh, “the unfortunate sufferer lingered but a few hours.” Was not that space sufficiently long when the moments were counted by agony ? Let us not tinge our views by the colouring of egotism ; and we shall perceive in this prompt departure, two motives for consolation ; that the deceased, whom we regret, saw not the long approach of death in advance ; and that, in meeting it, he experienced a brief pang. Such an end is worthy of envy, and is the last benefit of heaven.

So died my father, the best of fathers, whom every one recognized by his force of character, his gentleness and serenity. He did not dazzle, either by his vivacity of mind, or the variety of his acquirements. But he so said the simplest things as to render them the best. During sixty-five years he shared the pains of others, but never added to them. One day, having experienced unaccustomed fatigue, he retired early, and a few moments after, slept in death. Such a death, without pain and alarm, was worthy of a life so pure, that to render him happy in the life to come, it would be only necessary to leave him the remembrance of what he had been and what he had done upon earth.

A fact recognized by numberless observing physicians, is, that the last agony of a good man is rarely violent. It is probable, that in regard to all forms of death, mankind generally entertain the most erroneous conceptions. The vulgar, naturally embracing ideas that terrify them, believe that the dissolution of our earthly being is accompanied by all conceivable torments. It is probable, on the contrary, that, in entering upon eternal repose, we experience sensations analogous to those of a wearied man who feels the sweet influence of sleep stealing gently upon him.

These sensations, it is true, can be imagined to belong only to the last moments. Cruel maladies may precede them. But it would seem that nature invariably employs some means to mitigate the evils which she inflicts. Among mortal diseases, those which are severely painful are equally rapid; while those which are slow in their progress are comparatively free from pain. They allow the patient time to accustom himself to the idea of his departure. It is common for those who die in this way to close their career in the indulgence of dreamy and melancholy musings, solacing themselves alternately by resignation and hope.

A spectacle, touching to the heart, and, unhappily too common, is presented in the case of a fair and florid young woman struck with a pulmonary malady. Absolute unconsciousness of danger often accompanies this cruel disease to the last moment. We are perfectly aware that the patient cannot survive the coming winter. We hear her pantingly discuss the projects

which she expects to execute with her companions when health and spring shall return. The contrast of her daily increasing debility with her gentle gaiety, and of her future projects, with the rapid approach of death, makes the heart bleed. Every one is pained for her but herself. The hectic fever imparts a kind of joyous inspiration ; and nature, to absolve itself for inflicting death on one so young, leads her to her last hour in tranquil security. Death is to her as a sleep.

It is certain that physical sufferings are not those which infuse the utmost bitterness into this last cup. The gloomy thoughts with which death is invested are excited much more keenly by those affections which attach us to earth and our kind. We may well hold the understanding of those ambitious persons in disdain, who instruct us, that when they have finished their vast projects, their days shall thenceforward glide in peace and serenity. Death uniformly surprises them, tormenting themselves in the pursuit of their shadows. Others, with less shew of stupidity, repine because death strikes them reposing upon their pleasures. Their groans are caused by having forgotten the rapidity and evanescence of their joys. They had not known how to give them an additional charm in saying, “ we possess them but for a day.”

But suppose we regret neither ambitious projects nor transient pleasures, may we not wish to live longer for our children ? I attempt not to inculcate an impracticable or exaggerated system. There is a situation in which death is fearful. There is a period in which it would seem as if man ought not to die. It commences

when one has become a parent, and terminates when his sustaining hand is no longer indispensable to his family.

If nature call us to quit life before this epoch, all consolations resemble the remedies which palliate the pains of the dying, without possessing efficacy to remove them. Still we dare not so outrage nature as to believe that there can exist a situation in which a good man can find no alleviation for his sorrows. In quitting a life which he would wish to retain longer for the happiness of those most dear to him, he may derive force and magnanimity from the thought that he owes it to himself, to leave an example of courage and decent dignity in the last act; that he may show the influence of piety, resignation, the hope of a good man, and the discipline of that philosophy which forbids its disciple to struggle against the inevitable lot.

The approach of death always brings associations of gloom when it comes in advance of old age, to destroy the tender affections. In the slow and natural course of years, it is an event as simple, as little to be deprecated, as the other occurrences of life. Alas! during a short sojourn, we see those who were most dear, continually falling around us. We soon retain a less number with us than exist already in another world. The family is divided. I am not surprised that it becomes a matter of indifference to a wise man to remain with his present friends, or go and rejoin those that are absent.

As long as our children have need of our support, we resemble a traveller charged with business of extreme importance. As soon as these cares become

useless, we resemble him who travels at leisure and by chance ; and who takes up his lodging for the night wherever the setting sun surprises him. For me, I see the second epoch drawing near. If I reach it, I shall bless heaven for having awarded me a sufficient number of years, and for having diffused over them so few pains.

Let us not charge that man with weakness who, when on the eve of departure for distant and untravelled countries, is perceived to impart the intonation and tenderness of sorrow to his adieus. Ought we to exact more of him whom death is about to conduct to that “undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns ?” I would not seem to affect an austere and unnatural courage ; but whenever delivered from the only heart-rending agony, I will hope and strive to preserve sufficient tranquillity of mind to impress the sentiment on those I love, that we ought, with becoming dignity, to submit ourselves to the immutable laws of nature ; that complaint is useless, and murmuring unjust ; and that it becomes us, with transient but subdued emotion, to say, as we receive the final embrace, “ May we meet again ! ”

---

#### LETTER XXV.

##### CONCLUSION OF “DROZ SUR L’ART D’ETRE HEUREUSE.”

I SHALL have attained my purpose if these sketches should produce any degree of conviction that man, in

exercising his faculties, can mitigate his pains and multiply his pleasures, and, consequently, should serve as the outlines of a plan for reducing the pursuit of happiness to an art. I am aware that no view could be offered more contrary to the prevalent opinions in society. The morose and the frivolous make common cause to attack it. To them the very idea seems absurd; and the most indulgent among them question the good faith of him who announces it.<sup>62</sup>

To such grave and learned authorities, and more, even to the general suffrage against it, I might dare to oppose counterbalancing authorities. From Socrates to Franklin, I see philosophers who have been persuaded that man may be directed in the art, and instructed in the science of happiness; and that his faculties may be enlarged to pursue it. Who are the men that have entertained this persuasion? The very *elite* of the human race. Was each individual of them surrounded by those happy circumstances which would naturally inspire the same philosophy? They were persons who had experienced all the conditions of life. As if nature had studied to prove, by great examples, that our happiness depends upon our reason more than upon our circumstances, Epictetus lived in chains, and Marcus Aurelius on a throne.

We justly render homage to the Greek philosophers. Is their glory founded on their physics, long since known to be full of errors, or their metaphysics, often puerile? Upon neither; but they have merited the veneration of ages by indicating principles, the practice of which would render us better and more happy.

Which of the sciences did the admirable Socrates

chiefly esteem? The single one which teaches us how to live as we ought. Let it not be said that I substitute one science for another; and that Socrates taught morals, and not my pretended science of happiness. With the Greeks, morals had a perfectly definite end. Their philosophers held all their teaching subservient to conducting their disciples to happiness. Illustrious men! we disdain their maxims, but still revere their names. What fruit have we obtained from the boasted light and improvement of the age? We speak with enthusiasm of those sciences which they judged frivolous; and we treat as chimerical those studies which they judged alone worthy of human nature.

Suppose it had been said to these philosophers, "You will never reform the human race; and, instead of profitless dreams about wisdom and happiness, you ought to desist from subjects so futile, and consecrate your vigils to sciences more worthy to occupy your thoughts." Would they not have smiled with pity upon such counsel? Had they deigned to reply, would they not have said, "We are well aware that we shall not purify the heart of the wicked of its pride, envy, cupidity; but shall we derive no glory from having confirmed some good men in their career? In the midst of storms we felt our energies invigorated as we perceived that our spirits were in accordance with theirs. However feeble may have been the influence of our writings, affront not humanity by supposing that ours, however partial may have been their circulation, will, nowhere, find minds worthy to profit by them. Perhaps they will kindle the holy love of virtue in some of those who may read them in the youthful

age of unsophisticated and generous resolutions. Few, who read, will practise our doctrine in all its extent. Almost every one will be indebted to it for some solitary principles. It is possible we may never have numerous disciples. But we shall have some in all countries and in all time. It is a truth that ought to satisfy us, that such discussions are based neither upon exaggeration nor reverie. The science of happiness would indeed be chimerical if we expected that it would impart the same charms to all predicaments in which our lot might cast us. Instead of indulging such visionary hopes, if these discussions dissipate the errors which veil the true good from our eyes, if we learn to bring together all the easy and innocent pleasures, and to render the painful moments of life more rapid, we have been taught an art which it is possible to demonstrate and improve to an indefinite extent."

Does this art appear difficult? Let any one be named which it exacts no effort to acquire. Will it be thought that it cannot become of general utility? Will professors, of the highest reputation, cease to teach eloquence because they do not form as many orators as they have pupils? The more maturely I have reflected upon the art in question, the more clearly I am convinced that it may be assimilated to the other arts. It differs from them only in its superior importance. The interest and attention that all the rest merit should be measured only by their relation, more or less direct, to this first of all arts. To settle the utility of any science, law, enterprise, or

action, I know no better measure than to note its influence on human happiness.

If moral lessons leave but a transient influence, it may be attributed to two principal causes; the weakness of our nature, and the contagion of example. A third belongs to those who teach us the doctrine of morals, and is found in their exaggeration of their doctrine. They elevate the altar of wisdom upon steep mountains; and discourage our first steps, by proclaiming the painful efforts necessary to scale them. From the sadness of the ministers of the worship, it would not be inferred, that the divinity of the place was liberal in dispensing pure pleasures, bright hopes, oblivion of pain, and remembrances almost as pleasant as either.

It is a fatal error to imagine that it is useful to exaggerate the doctrine of morals. To do this, fails not to excite disgust towards the precepts inculcated. Men, that have been deceived upon these points, as soon as they judge for themselves, in their impatience to shake off the yoke of prejudices, are tempted to reject principles the most wise with those errors by which they have been misled. That we may be heard and followed, let us be true. Let us present, with force, the evils which the abuse of our faculties brings upon our short career.—Let us avow with equal frankness, that we commit an egregious mistake, if we refuse, or neglect to draw from our faculties all the advantages in our power, to embellish life.

The doctrine of morals is a phrase that has been often employed to designate the propagation of false

and extravagant principles. For this phrase, which is too worn out, and of equivocal import, suppose we substitute a definition, which will clearly indicate the end towards which morals ought to be directed. Morals is that which teaches the art of happiness. If it be not so, the foundation of ethics is a mere matter of convention, either useless or dangerous.

Morals should be taught only as subservient to happiness. Austerity should be banished equally from the manner of teaching, and from the matter that is taught.—They are the useful teachers whose tenderness of heart impels them rather to inspire virtue than to enjoin it ; and whose brilliant imagination enables them to offer wise principles under such pleasant forms as charm the mind and awaken curiosity. If I were to point to one of the best works on morals, according to my judgment, I would name "*The Vicar of Wakefield.*" To present a family struggling with every form of misfortune, and constantly opposing resignation or courage to each, is to offer the sublimest painting that it is possible to execute. The concurrence of genius and virtue could alone have conceived the idea. All good men owe the tribute of gratitude and veneration to the memory of the author.

The concurrent influence of public institutions and education would be necessary to render the general habits conformable to happiness. Books, the influence of which I certainly have not exaggerated, may be useful to men raised by the discipline of their reason above the multitude. That man is happy, who knows how to add good books to the number of his friends, who often retires from the world to enjoy their peace-

ful and instructive conversation, and always brings back serenity, courage, and hope.

Were the doctrine true, that it is impossible to increase the happiness or diminish the evils of life, it is not perceived that it would not still be necessary to follow my principles. Preach this discouraging doctrine to a good man, and you may afflict him, but will obtain no influence over his conduct. He will always strive to improve his condition, mitigate the sufferings that press upon him, and render men more compassionate and happy. Such noble efforts cannot be entirely lost. The pure intentions, the sincere wishes, which he forms for the good of his kind, give to his mind a pleasant serenity. It assures his own happiness to mediate the means of increasing that of others.

---

## LETTER XXVI.

### THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION.

THE considerate Knight of La Mancha would not dismiss his follower and friend to the government of Barataria, without a few more last words, and without arming him for his high functions with a copious homily of counsels and admonitions. Before I leave you to the stern encounter of the painful emergencies of life, to unravel its intricacies, and settle its innumerable perplexing and difficult alternatives, I do not mean to oppress your memory with the thousand and one particular directions, to meet every imaginable

occurrence with the right mode of conduct. Innumerable cases of perplexity will be continually occurring, that can only be settled by extempore judgment and prudence. I shall limit my counsels to a single one among the many questions of universal application, each one of which presents a great variety of aspects and alternatives; questions of difficult solution for the young; and yet on the right disposal of which depend their character, success, and happiness in life. Among the subjects to which I refer, are, the choice of a profession—decision in regard to our plans and projects—the selection of our company—the dispositions with which we should regard the place assigned us in society—the deportment appropriate to gentlemen and ladies—the proper selection of books—the mode and place of worship, and what are the best evidences of true wisdom in character. The first of these is the only one upon which I shall offer you my remarks.

In the choice of a profession, the first point to be consulted is our physical and mental temperament and endowment, or aptitude. That some are constituted for sedentary and inactive pursuits, others to beat the anvil, follow the plough, or mount the reeling mast with a firm step in the uproar of a tempest; some for the bar, others for the pulpit, and still others to be musicians, painters, poets, or engineers, I consider a truth so universally and obviously taught by observation and experience, that I shall not deem it necessary to pause to prove it to such as would contest it. I am sufficiently informed that there are those who contend that all minds are formed equal and alike—and that all the after differences result from education and

circumstances. With them, Virgil and Byron had no constitutional aptitudes to poetry, and the same training that gave Handel and Gluck their preeminence in music, would have imparted to any other mind equal skill. According to their system, La Place and Zerah Colburn were no earlier or more strongly inclined to mathematics, than other children. These sapient physiologists in descending to the animal tribes, ought to find, that web-footed animals had no natural aptitude for water, the canine tribes for animal food, and the ruminating, to feed on grass and vegetables. I shall leave those who hold this dogma to retain it unquestioned so far as I am concerned ; and they will be obliged to leave me to mine, which is, that there are immense differences in the physical and mental constitution, differences which every enlightened parent discovers in his children from the very dawn of their faculties—differences which every intelligent instructor notes in his pupils, as soon as he becomes intimately acquainted with them—differences which, to keen and close observation, distinguish more or less each individual in the immense mass of society. No matter how much alike these persons are reared and trained ; the most striking diversities of endowment are often observed in members of the same family, reared and educated with all possible uniformity. This is, no doubt, a beautiful trait of that general impress of variety which providence has marked upon every portion of the animate and inanimate creation. Nature has willed, that not only men should possess an untiring diversity of form, countenance, and mind, but that not two pebbles on the shore, or insects in the air, should

be found precisely alike. The sign manual of the Creator on his works is a grand and infinite variety.

The physiological inquiry whence these differences of temperament and aptitude arise, is one which belongs to another subject; though I have no wish to conceal my belief, that the fundamental positions of phrenology are as immovably founded in fact, and as certainly follow from observation, as the leading axioms of any physical science. It is enough for my present purpose, that the order of every form of society calls for an infinite variety of aptitude, talent, and vocation, and that nature has furnished the requisite variety of endowment, adequately to meet those calls.

The ancient system, still in use, goes on the supposition, that all minds are originally alike; and that all children are equally fit to be trained for each of the vocations. Hence we see tailors at the anvil, and blacksmiths on the shopboard, innumerable excellent ploughmen generating prose, and sleeping at the bar and pulpit, and ingenious fiddlers ruined as engineers; in a word, all that ludicrous disarrangement and seeming play at cross purposes, in virtue of which, men, who would have been borne by a strong current to the first place in the profession for which nature designed them, become dull and useless in another. A great part of the whole labour of instruction has thus been worse than thrown away. It has been the hard effort of poetic fiction, labouring the huge stone up an acclivity, to see it recoil and hear it thunder back again; the effort to circumvent, and cross the purposes of nature.

It seems to me to be among the most responsible inquiries of a parent and a conscientious instructor, what pursuit or calling is indicated for his child by his temperament and aptitude? The boy, who like Pope, even in childhood lisps in numbers, because the numbers come, will probably be found to have not only an ear for the peculiar harmony of rhythm, but an inventive mind, stored with images, and a quick eye to catch the various phases of nature and society. If placed under favourable circumstances, and judicious training, this child will become a poet, while ninety-nine in a hundred of those who make verses, could by no forcing of nature ever rise higher than rhymers. Thus may be detected the embryo germs of temperament, endowment, and character, which give the undeveloped promise of the future orator, lawyer, mathematician, naturalist, mechanician, in a word, of the mind fitted to attain distinction in any walk in society. I am aware of the mistakes, which fond and doting parents are likely to make, in interpreting an equivocal, perhaps an accidental sally of the cherished child, to be a sure proof of genius and endowment. No judicious and intelligent parent will be in much danger of being led astray by fondness so weak and misguided.—Wherever real endowment exists, it never fails to put forth continual indications. It is the elastic vigour of nature working at the root, to which no foolish partiality will be blind.

It is true, that nature, equally beneficent in what she has granted, and what she has withheld, forms the million for the common duties and undistinguished employments; stamps them at once with a charac-

teristic uniformity and variety ; and sends them forth with specific adaptations, but not so strongly marked, as not to be mistaken with comparative impunity. Hence the ordinary pursuits and employments of life are conducted with general success, notwithstanding these smaller mistakes in regard to endowment.

Not so in those rarer instances, where she has seen fit to stamp the clear and strong impress of peculiar endowment and aptitude, in which the embryo poet, painter, mathematician, naturalist, and orator are indicated by such unequivocal signs, as cannot easily be overlooked, or mistaken by any competent judge. Hence, in the biography of most of those who have truly and greatly distinguished themselves, we are informed that the most ordinary people about them were perfectly aware of the harbingers of their future greatness. I am confident, that to keen and faithful observation these harbingers are as palpable in the germ, as in the development. To mistake in such a case, and not only to withdraw the youthful aspirant from the career to which nature beckons him, but to force him into one, in which every effort must be rowing against the stream, is to consign him to an Egyptian bondage, a slavery of the soul, by which many a spirit of firmer mould has been broken down, and lost to society, and others worse than lost, rendered the scourge and curse of all with whom their lot was cast.

Such as have arrived at a maturity of reason and years, to have the responsibility of the choice of a profession cast upon themselves, will infer, what are my views in regard to the first element, by which they ought to be directed. It involves a previous question,

for what pursuit or calling their temperament, faculties, and powers best fit them? By long and close observation, pursued with a fidelity proportioned to its importance, by intent study of themselves, as called out by the changes of their health and prospects, the fluctuations of their spirits, their collisions with society, in all the contingencies that befall them, they can scarcely fail to form some conception of the peculiar cast of their powers, and the walk in life, for which their capabilities are best adapted. If they select wisely in this respect, habit and time will certainly render it the profession of their inclinations.

As soon as the mind begins to survey the professions in regard to the honours, emolument, and success, which they respectively offer, there is great danger, lest imagination, taking the place of reason, should look at the scene through a prism, and see all the chances of an illusive brilliancy of promise, which sober experience will be sure to disappoint. There are the immense promises of the law, alluring a crowd of aspirants and competitors, the greater portion of whom must fail to realize their expectations. There are the honours of the physician, binding him, by the strongest of all ties, to the confidence and affection of the families that employ him. He exercises the only profession that does not depend upon the caprice of fashion, or the vibrations of transient feeling. There is the ministry, with its time-honoured claims, its peculiar title to be admitted to the privacy of affection, sickness, and death, and its paramount capability of the highest forms of that only eloquence that swells and softens the heart, by coming home to men's business and bosoms. There is the

varied range, and the rapidly acquired fortunes of merchandize and commerce; the growing interest and importance of the new portico to a new order of nobility, manufactures. There is agriculture, always seen to be the most satisfactory and useful of employments, and now rapidly coming to be viewed in the light of scientific investigation and of a liberal pursuit. To adjust and settle the respective views, which the judgment and imagination will take of the chances of these various pursuits, and their contiguity to love, marriage, wealth, and distinction, will be found to be no easy task. Sometimes one view will predominate—sometimes another; and the mind appears like a pendulum vibrating between them.

Reason presents one decisive view of the subject. All these chances—all these balances of advantage and disadvantage have long since settled to their actual and natural level. If the law presents more tempting baits and more rich and glittering prizes, over-crowded competition, heart-wearing scramble, difficulty of rising above the common level, into the sun and air of distinction, are appended, as inevitable weights, in the opposing scale. The advantages and disadvantages of all the professions are adjusted by the level of society, exactly in the same way. He who is guided in this inquiry by common sense, will comprehend at a glance, that it is impossible, in the nature of things, to combine all the advantages and evade all the disadvantages of any one pursuit. No expectation more irrational and disappointing can be indulged, than to unite incompatible circumstances of happiness. The inquirer must reflect that such a pursuit connects a series of fortunate

chances; but there are the counterbalancing evils. Such another has a different series of both. It is folly to expect to form an amalgam of these immiscible elements. Reason can expect no more than that we unite in the calling, finally fixed upon, as many fortunate circumstances as possible, and avoid, as far as may be, its inconveniences and evils.

---

## **NOTES.**



## NOTES.

---

### Note 1, page 40.

THE history of circumstances under which I commenced reading the book of M. Droz, *sur l'art d'être heureuse*, the substance of the first chapter of which is given as above, will not be irrelevant, I would hope, *to you*, if to others. It was a beautiful April morning, and I had wandered away from the town, with the book in my hand, among the hills. I inhaled a bland atmosphere that just ruffled half-formed leaves, and shook from trees, shrubs, and flowers, the pearly drops, and the delicious aroma of the season. A dun, purple, smoky vapour veiled the brilliancy of the sun, and gave the face of nature its most exquisite colouring. A repose, like sleep, seemed to rest upon the earth, only interrupted by the ruminating of the flocks and herds on the hill sides. The bees sped away to their nectar cells from tree and flower, leaving upon the dark and fleeting line of their passage through the air, a hushing hum like the tones of an Eolian harp. A large town, with its ceaseless and heavy roll of mingled sounds, lay outstretched beneath my feet. Painted boats were slowly wending their way along a canal from the town and winding their course round the foot of the hills. Before me was a vast panorama of activity, business, commerce, and all the accompaniments of a busy town. A few paces behind me, and I was plunged in a forest where town, and commerce, and life were hidden as if by the shifting of a scene, and the jay screamed, and the woods showed as to the red man who had seen them centuries before. A beautiful spring-branch murmured by me in its deep and flood-worn channel down the

glen. A little advance spread the town before me. A little retreat gave me back to the wilderness of nature in the forest. Here I had often enjoyed much of the little that life allows us to enjoy, in quiet communion with nature and my own thoughts. I had never experienced it in higher measures than at this moment. Could I, by a volition, have arrested the flight of time, and the succession of sensations, here would I have fixed the *punctum stans* of existence, and been content to have this scene always around me, and the enjoyment of this union of meditation and repose, perpetual.

But a change came over my thoughts as I read the quaint axiom laid down with such mathematical precision, *Man is formed to be happy*. What I saw, and what I felt, my own consciousness assented to the proposition. But startled by a transient feeling of pain, a new train of ideas succeeded. I have only to pass, said I, the short interval between this repose, verdure, quietness, and internal satisfaction, to reach the scene of dust and smoke before me. Besides spires and mansions, I shall see hovels, poor, blind, lame, squalid, blaspheming youth, imbecile age, prostitutes, beggars, haunts of felons and outlaws; and even in the abodes of what shows external comfort and opulence, the sick and dying hanging in agonies of suspense upon the countenance of their physician and friends, as they catch gleams of hope or shades of despair from their aspect. Many of these sick, even if they recover, will only be restored to trembling age, to perpetual and incurable infirmity, and to evils worse than death. Yet, unhappy in living, and afraid to die, they cling to this wretched existence as though it were the highest boon. These varied shades of misery that the picture before me will present to the slightest inspection in ten thousand forms and combinations, are visible in every part of our world. I, too, shall soon add to the deepness of the shading. My friends will depart in succession; and, in my turn, on the bed of death, I shall look in the faces of those most dear to me, as I am compelled to depart out of life. What an affecting contrast with what I see and what I am!

Why there is this partial evil in the world, is not a question which I shall here attempt to vex; for I could add nothing to

what has already been said upon the subject. It is enough that the evil does actually exist. Is it remediless? Can life be so spent as to leave a balance of enjoyment set over against the evil? These are my questions. There will always be inequality, ignorance, vice, disease, a measureless amount of misery and death. What portion of the evils of life can be cured? What portion must be manfully, piously endured? What transient gleams of joy can be made to illumine the depth of shade?

I yield entire faith to the doctrine before you, that, estimate these evils as highly as you may, a balance of enjoyment may still be struck in favour of life. I do not doubt, that more than one-half the suffering and sorrow which every individual endures, is simply of his own procuring, and not only that it might have been wholly avoided, but that positive enjoyment might have been substituted in its place. An inconceivable mass of misery would at once be struck from the sum, if, as I have already remarked, we knew the physical, organic, and moral laws of our being, and conformed ourselves to them. A uniform, consistent, and thorough education would cure us of innumerable errors of opinion, injurious habits, and a servile conformity to established and prescribed prejudices, and would impart to us wisdom, force of character, and resignation, to enable us to sustain, as we ought, those that are unavoidable. Imperfection, pain, decay, and death, in the inevitable measures belonging to organized beings, would remain. The dignity of true philosophy, the stern consciousness of the necessity of courage, profound and filial submission to the divine will, and the well-defined and investigated hopes of religion would accomplish the remainder.

Consider one single evil—fear, unnecessary fear, an entirely gratuitous infusion of bitterness in the cup of life. I ask the man who has seen fourscore winters to tell me, were all that he has suffered in his pilgrimage cast into one account, what would be the greatest item in the sum? I believe that almost every one might answer, that more than half might be charged to one single source of suffering—fear—fear of opinion, reproach, shame, poverty, pain, danger, disease, and death. I pause not to consider the usual dull illustrations of the wisdom and utility of assigning

to us the instinct of fear, to put us on our guard, and to enable us to ward off evils. It is not this instinctive shrinking and vigilance to avoid evil that I consider. Let education have its most perfect work in raising us superior to this servile and tormenting passion, and too much of it would still remain. Of all that we have suffered from fear, what portion has been of any service in shielding us from that which we apprehended? Not only have we avoided no evil in consequence, but the enervating indulgence of this passion has taken from us our quickness of foresight, our coolness of deliberation, our firmness of action and resolve, by the exercise of which we might have escaped all that we dreaded. We may calculate then, that every pang we have felt from this source, has been just so much gratuitous agony.

Not only natural instincts, but acquired habits are transmitted; and this evil of fearfulness, this foreboding of apprehension, shaping the fashion of uncertain ills, has been the growing inheritance of countless generations; and a shrinking and effeminate timidity has been woven into our mental constitution by nature. Education instead of resisting, or counteracting, or diminishing the transmitted mischief, has laboured with terrible effect, to make it a principle and a motive to action, and the most efficient engine of the inculcated systems of morality and religion. Fear of death, and a slavish terror, springing from misapprehensions of the character of the divine being, and unmanly and debilitating horrors in regard to the unknown future in another life, these have been the chief sources of this evil. Terribly have the father and the mother, the minister and the schoolmaster, and general prescription and example concurred, to strengthen this barbarous instrument of governing, which never inspired a good action, and which it would be cruel to apply to a slave. Horrible have been the bondage, the mean abjectness of spirit, the long agony of the soul, which this inculcation has inspired.—We have been sedulously trained in a course of discipline which has made us afraid of our own shadows in the dark, and inspired us with shrinking and terror in view of a silent and peaceful corse, which, in the eye of sober reason, should originate associations no more fearful than a waxen figure. We, who are the victims of this inborn and instinctive inheritance, we

who have had it inwoven by precept, education, and example, and the prevalent impression, that it is one of the purest and most religious motives of action, are best able from our own consciousness, and the memory of what we have suffered from it, to present just views of it to others.—It may be in us an ingrafted principle, too deep to be uprooted by any rules, or reasons, or system of discipline; a habit too unyieldingly become a part of our nature to be overcome. But with minds more docile, with temperaments more pliant, with habits less fixed, it may be otherwise. The next generation may transmit a more manly and less timid nature to the generations to come. Education, building on the basis of minds of more force, may then accomplish its perfect work, imbuing them with a filial confidence in the Almighty, a sense of the beauty of well-doing, and a perfect fearlessness in regard to everything, but doing wrong. The happier generation of that era will be spared the agony of all deaths but the single one of nature; and will be fortified by discipline, and the force of general opinion and example to regard this inevitable law of our being, this merciful provision of providence, this rest for the worn and weary, as the hireling regards the evening shade, when he reposes from his labours and receives his reward. I shall elsewhere advert to this evil in more detail, and point out such remedies, as appear to me to be suggested by reason, education, and religion.

## Note 2, page 42.

This classification of the great divisions of our species, as they are occupied in the pursuit of happiness, seems to me to unite truth with poetry and philosophy, and to be both happy and just. The disappointed, who affirm that the earth offers no happiness, the gloomy, who view life as a place of penance, austerity and tears, the dissipated and voluptuous, who seek only pleasure, and whose doctrine is, that life offers no happiness but in unbridled indulgence, the ambitious, who consider happiness to consist only in wealth, power, and distinction, and a very numerous class who have no object in view but to vegetate through life by chance, constitute the great mass of mankind. The number of those who

have lived by system, and disciplined themselves to the wise and calculating pursuit of happiness, has always been small. But there have still been some, enough to prove the practicability of the art. Wherever we find a person who declares that he has lived happily, if his enjoyments have been of a higher kind than the mere vegetative easiness of a felicitous temperament and an unthinking joyousness, we shall find, on inquiry, that he has been a philosopher in the highest and best sense. He may scarcely understand the import of the term; but however ignorant of systems and the learning of the schools, if he have made it his chief business to learn, by the study of himself and general observation, how to be happy, he is the true sage. He may well be content, let others regard him as they may, for he has put in requisition the best wisdom of life. No one maxim especially, ever included more important and practical truth than that to be happy we must assiduously train ourselves to retain through life a keen and juvenile freshness of sensibility to enjoyment, and must early learn to anticipate the effect of experience and years in cultivating a stern indifference, a strong spirit of endurance, and unshinking obtuseness to pain. It has been my fortune to see examples of persons who enjoyed life even to old age, with all the ardour and the quick perception of the young, and who had always been as remarkable for their impassive and heroic endurance of pain.

Note 3, page 44.

We are told, in ridicule of this study, that men have been very happy without rules, and before any system had been laid down, and will continue to be happy, unconscious of the means by which they arrived at their enjoyment. So have men reasoned without acquaintance with the rules of logic; but this proves not the inutility of the study. Let the objector convince us that the happy without thought and rules would not have been happier if they had sought enjoyment with the keen and practical intelligence of a Franklin.

Whatever men do well without definite aim, and without rules, it is clear to me they would do better with these advantages. The

same argument equally militates with all means of moral instruction. "The world," the objector may say, "will proceed as before, say what we may." But this would be deemed no just ground of objection to an attempt to improve the age, though the efforts may have little visible and apparent effect.

## Note 4, page 45.

No term has been more hackneyed in these days, than education. We have had system upon system, and treatise upon treatise; and more has been written and declaimed upon this subject than almost any other. And yet scarcely a word has been said upon a grand and radical defect in all existing systems, which reduces to a very humble scale the results of the best concerted efforts. I lay out of the question all other incongruities, that I might easily mention, and come directly to that which I have chiefly in my mind. Each of the different instructors, through whose forming hands the pupil passes, communicates to him different, militant, and incompatible impulses; so that instead of a continuous operation and an onward movement, it seems to be the work of each successive teacher to undo that of all the others. The father and mother, besides various minor inculcations, labour, as their highest object, to infuse into the mind of their child ambition, and the desire of pre-eminence and distinction. The schoolmaster instils the same principles under such different circumstances, as to render the envy, rivalry, and competition of the school-room almost another series of impulses. The minister and the catechism enjoin humility, meekness, and a disposition to prefer others in honour before themselves. "Be honest and high-minded," say the parents and teachers. "Be adroit, and circumvent those who are watching to take advantage of your weakness and inexperience," says the master at the counting-desk. The elder friends teach one class of maxims, and the younger another. The actual world inculcates rules different from all the rest. Thus the parents, the schoolmaster, the minister, the politician, society, and the world, are continually varying the direction of the youthful traveller. No wonder that most people either have no character, or one that is a com-

pound of the most incongruous elements. A pupil, to have a strong, wise, marked, and efficient character, should have had it steadily trained to one end; and every impulse ought to have been in a right line, and concurrent with every other. Such must be the case before honest and uniform characters will be formed.

There is little force in the objection, that he who has not been constantly happy himself, ought not to presume to teach others to be happy. On the contrary, as the author beautifully suggests, none can discuss, with so much experience and force of truth, the dangers of shipwreck, as they who have themselves suffered it. If the art of happiness can be taught, the teacher must necessarily have paid the price of a qualification to impart it, in having been himself unhappy. Conscious that he had the susceptibility of enjoyment, and wanted only the right direction of the means, he will be able to set up way-marks as a warning to others, at the points where he remembers that he went astray himself.

Note 5, page 46.

The necessity of moderating our desires, and reducing them within the limits of what we may reasonably hope to acquire, has been the beaten theme of prose and song, for so many ages, that the triteness of repetition has finally caused the great truth to be almost disregarded by moralists. Yet who can calculate the sum of torment that has been inflicted by wild and unreasonable desires, by visionary and puerile expectations, beyond all probable bounds of means to realize them, indulged and fostered until they have acquired the force of habit! Whose memory cannot recur to sufferings from envy and ill will, generated by cupidity, for the possessions and advantages of others that we have not! Who can count the pangs which he has endured from extravagant and unattainable wishes! Poetry calls our mortal sojourn a vale of tears; yet what ingenuity to multiply the gratuitous means of self-torment! Has another health, wealth, beauty, fortune, endowment, which I have not? Envy will neither take them from him, nor transfer them to me. Why, then, should I allow vultures to prey upon my spirit? Learn neither to regret what you want and

cannot supply, nor to hate him who is more fortunate. With all his apparent advantages over you, he wants, perhaps, what you may possess, a tranquil mind. There is little doubt that you are the happier person if you contemplate his advantages and his possessions with a cheerful and unrepining spirit.

I present two considerations only, as inducements to control and regulate your desires. 1. In indulging them beyond reason, you are fostering internal enemies, and becoming a self-tormentor. In the quaint language of the ancient divines, they are like fire, good servants, but terrible masters. 2. The higher gifts of fortune, the common objects of envious desire, are awarded to but a few. The number of those who may entertain any reasonable hope of reaching them is very small. But every one can moderate his desires. Every one can set bounds to his ambition. Every one can limit his expectations. What influence can fortune, events, or power exercise over a person who has learned to be content with a little, and who has acquired courage to resign even that without repining? Franklin might well smile at the impotent malice of those who would deprive him of his means and his business, when he proved to them that he could live on turnips and rain water. It is not the less true or important because it has been a million times said, that happiness, the creature of the mind, dwells not in external things.

Note 7, page 48.

Wherever civilized man has been found, the first effort of his mind, beyond the attainment of his animal wants, has been to travel into the regions of imagination, to create a nobler and more beautiful world, than the dull and common-place existing one, to assign to man a higher character and purer motives than belong to the actual race. To possess a frame inaccessible to pain and decay, and to dwell in eternal spring, surrounded by beauty and truth, is an instinctive desire. A mind of any fertility can create and arrange such a scene; and in this dreaming occupation the sensations are tranquillizing and pleasant, beyond the more exciting enjoyment of actual fruition. With the author, I deem the

propensity for this sort of meditation neither unworthy in itself, nor tending to consequences to be deprecated. So far as my own experience goes, and I am not without my share, it neither enervates nor satiates. It furnishes enjoyment that is calm and soothing; and such enjoyment, instead of enfeebling, invigorates the mind to sustain trials and sorrows. Why should we not enter into every enjoyment that is followed by no painful consequences? Why should we not be happy when we may? Is he not innocently employed who is imagining a fairer scene—a better world—more benevolence, and more joy, than this “visible diurnal sphere” affords? Addison is never presented to me in a light so amiable, as when he relates his day-dreams, his universal empire, in which he puts down all folly and all wickedness, and makes all his personages good and happy. Every writer who has produced a romance worth reading, has been endowed in this way, as a matter of course; and I confidently believe that the greatest and best of men have been most strongly inclined to this sort of mental creation. May not their noblest achievements have been the patterns of those archetypes? I have no doubt that imaginings infinitely more interesting than any recorded in romances, Arabian tales, or any other work of fiction, have imparted their transient exhilaration to meditative minds, and have passed away with the things that never grew into the material and concrete grossness of sensible existence. If ink and paper and printing could have been created as cheaply and readily as a new earth and better men and women, and scenes more like what we hope for at last, the world would have had bequeathed to it more volumes than would have weighed down all the ponderous dulness of by-gone romance. I cannot assure myself that you would have been amused or instructed in reading; but you would then have been able to form some idea of the hours of pain, embarrassment, lack of all external means of pleasant occupation, journeying, cold, and watching, that have been beguiled by this employment. I only add, that so far as my experience extends, the first calm days of spring, and the period of Indian summer in autumn, are most propitious to this sort of reverie.

## Note 8, page 49.

These, and the subsequent views of ambition in this essay of M. Droz, have been the theme of severe and sweeping strictures upon the general tendency of his book. Ambitious and aspiring men will find it ridiculous, of course, to exact, as a pre-requisite to the pursuit of happiness, the abandonment or the moderation of ambitious thoughts, especially in such a country as ours, where some boon is held out to tempt these aspirings in almost every condition, from the mansion to the cabin. It may not be amiss for men who are themselves aspirants, and to whom the access to distinction and power is easy, and the attainment probable, to declaim against the tendency of these maxims. I know well, that in every rank and position, the inculcation of aspiring thoughts, emulation and rivalry is the first and last lesson, the grand and beaten precept upon which the million are acting. I am well aware how many hearts are wrung by all the fierce and tormenting passions, associated with this devouring one. I affirm nothing in regard to my own interior views, respecting what the world calls fame, glory, and immortality. Those who are most dear to me, will not understand me to be entering my *caveat* to dissuade them from this *last infirmity of noble minds*. Could I do it with more eloquence than ever yet flowed from tongue or pen, there will always be a hundred envious competitors for every single niche in the temple of fame. It can be occupied but by one; and he who gains it, will exult in his elevation only during its freshness and novelty. The rest, to the torment of fostered and devouring desires, will add the bitterness of disappointment.

Since it is a fact out of question, that the greater portion of the species can never secure the objects of their ambition, is it ill-judged in one who treats upon the science of happiness, to write for the million, instead of the few favourites of fortune? The principles of a philosophic investigation ought not to be narrowed down to meet the wishes of the few. The question is, whether, taking into view ambition and all the associated feelings, the toil of pursuit, and the difficulty and unfrequency of the attainment of its objects, it is, on the whole, favourable to happiness to cherish

the passion, or not? I am clear, that even the successful aspirants, if their rivalry were more generous and philanthropic, and their indulgence of the cankering and corroding of ill-concealed envy, derision, hate, and scorn, were regulated, would be not the less rapid in reaching the goal, or happy in the fruition of their attainment. I have little doubt, if an exact balance of enjoyment and suffering could be struck at the last hour, between two persons whose circumstances in other respects had been similar, one of whom had been distinguished in place and power, in consequence of cultivating ambition; and the other obscure in peaceful privacy, in consequence of having chosen that condition, that the scale of happiness would decidedly incline in favour of the latter. In a word, it is the index of sound calculation to prepare for the fate of the million, rather than that of the few. Repress ambition as much as we may, there will always remain enough to render the world an aceldama, and the human heart a place of concentrated torment.

It is clear, therefore, to me, that in making up the debt and credit account of life, in relation to happiness, most of the sentiments associated with ambition, and its prolific family of self-tormenting passions, may be set down as gratuitous items of misery, superinduced by our own voluntary discipline. I shall be asked, what is to stimulate to exertion, to study, toil, and sacrifice, to great and noble actions, and what shall lead to fame and renown, if this incentive be taken away? I answer, that, what is ordinarily dignified with the appellation of ambition, is a vile mixture of the worst feelings of our nature. There is in all minds truly noble, a sufficient impulse towards great actions, apart from these movements, which are generally the excitements of little and mean spirits. Take the whole nature of man into the calculation, and there can never be a want of sufficient impulse towards distinction, without a particle of those contemptible motives, which are generally put to the account of praiseworthy incitement. Truly great men have been remarkable for their exemption from envy, the inseparable concomitant of conscious deficiency; and for a certain calm and tranquil spirit, indicating moderation and comparative indifference in the struggle of emulation. They are able to say, in regard to the highest boon of ambition,

“ I neither spurn, nor for the favour call,  
It comes unasked-for, if it comes at all.”

Why, then, in a world, and in an order of society where ambition, with its associated passions, brings in an enormous amount to the mass of human self-inflicted torment, should he be censured who advises, that in the philosophic and calculating pursuit of happiness, this element of misery should be, as much as possible, repressed? The question may be more strongly urged when we take into the account the consideration, that the far greater portion of the species must calculate on the bitterness of disappointment, in addition to the miseries which are inseparable from the indulgence of this passion. All the inordinate thirst for power and fame, of the countless aspirants, who desire to be Alexanders, Cæsars, and Napoleons, not only is so much subtracted from their enjoyment, and added to their misery, but has little tendency to aid them to attainments, which, after all, are as frequently the award of contingency, as of calculation.

Let the evils of retirement and obscurity be fairly balanced with those of gratified ambition, and let the aspirant feel that they are absolutely incompatible, the one with the other.—Let him then make his election in view of the consequences, and not foolishly expect that he can unite incompatible advantages. If he chooses the dust and scramble of the arena, and the intoxicating pleasures at the goal, let him not repine that he cannot unite with them those of repose, retirement, and a tranquil mind. If, on the contrary, he prefers to hold on the noiseless tenor of his way in peace and privacy, let not the serpents of envy sting him, when he sees the ear of the fortunate aspirant drawn forward by the applauding million. Let not murmurs arise in his heart, when he hears or reads of the rewards, honours, and immortality of those whom he may believe to be endowed no higher than himself, with talents or virtues. Let him say “ No one can show me the mind, or paint me the consciousness of that man. Fortune and my own choice have assigned me the shade. Let me not embitter its coolness and its satisfactions, by idle desires to unite advantages that are in their nature incongruous. Let me remember that mine is the condition of the million. My Creator cannot have doomed so vast a propor-

tion of his creatures to a state which is necessarily miserable. All that remains to me, is to make the best of the common lot."

Note 9, page 51.

Severe strictures have also been passed upon this maxim. I well know that the common rules proposed to the young, in commencing their serious and more advanced studies, lead them to look forward to happiness as a garland suspended from the goal, an object only in remote expectation, the fruition of which should be hoped for only at a period of life when few are capable of enjoyment, even if the means were in their power. To calculate on comfort and repose early in life, has been considered as a sort of effeminate weakness.

These unphilosophic views of education have, more than almost any other, thrown over the whole course of preparatory discipline for life, a repulsive gloom, tending to fill the mind of the pupil with dismay and disgust in view of his studies. The young should be early imbued with the sentiment, that God sent them here to be happy, not in indolence, intoxication, voluptuousness, or insanity; but in earnest and vigorous discipline for coming duties. And at this bright epoch, when nature spreads a charm over existence, a philosophic teacher may easily train them to invest their studies, labours, and pursuits, and perhaps even their privations and severer toils, with a colouring of cheerfulness and gaiety, when contemplated as the only means of discipline by which they may hope to reach a desired end. They should be trained to meet events, and brave the shock of adversity with a firm and searching purpose, to find either a way to mitigate the pressure, or to increase self-respect by the noble pride of manifesting to themselves, with how much calmness and patient endurance they can overcome the inevitable ills of their condition. In other words, they should make enjoyment a means as well as an end, that they may carry onward, from their first days, an accumulating stock of happiness, with which courage and cheerfulness may paint future anticipations in the mellow lustre of past remembrances. In this way the bow of promise may be made to bend its brilliant arch

over every period of this transient existence, connecting what has been, and what will be, in the same radiant span.

Entertaining such views of the direction which might be given to the juvenile mind, I mourn over those weak parents who are nursing their children with effeminate fondness, not allowing the *winds to visit them too roughly*, pampering their wishes instead of teaching them to repress them : and rather striving to ward from them all pains and privations, than teaching them that they must encounter innumerable sorrows and disappointments, and disciplining them to breast the ills of life with a conquering fortitude. Opulence generally gives birth to this injudicious plan of parental education. Penury, as little directed by sound views, but impelled by the stern teaching of necessity, imparts to the children of the poor, a much more salutary discipline, and they ordinarily come forward with a more robust spirit, with more vigour, power, and elasticity ; and it is in this way that Providence adjusts the balance of advantages between these different conditions.

We have all admired the practical philosophy of the man who, when sick of a painful disease, thanked God that he was not subject to a still more painful one ; and when under the pressure of the latter, found cause for cheerfulness, that he was not visited with both diseases at the same time. Akin to this was the noble fortitude of the mariner, who, when a limb was carried away by a cannon-ball, congratulated himself that it was not his head. I do not say that any one can find cheerfulness in contemplating such Spartan spirits, but that a philosophy of this sort would disarm the common ills of life of much of their power, and would even enable the sufferer to find enjoyment in the midst of them.

It would be no disadvantage even to the ambitious and aspiring, to abstract from the toils of their pursuit, the bitter and corroding spirit of rivalry and envy, and in its stead to cultivate sentiments of kindness, complacency, and moderation. Let their ends be so noble as to give an air of dignity to the means that they employ, and they will throw a splendour of self-respect over their course. Let the aspirant say, " I struggle not for myself, but to procure competence for aged parents, to gild their declining years with the view of my success. It is for dependant relatives, orphans,

the poor, and friendless, whom Providence has given particular claims on me, that I struggle. It is to benefit and gladden those who are dearer to me than life, and not for my own sordid vanity and ambition, that I strive to toil up the ascent of fame."

In fine, the author, while he inculcates the maxim that we should, from the beginning, study to number happy days, would not teach, as he has been charged with teaching, that we may give labour and study, and the toil of preparation, to the winds, and consult only the indolent leading of our passions ; for he knows, as do we all, that this course results in any thing but " happy days." He would send us, on the contrary, in pursuit of happiness, to the teaching of wisdom and experience, that never bestow impracticable lessons. He would only inculcate, that while others have taught us to seek ultimate happiness through means of pain, we should make the means themselves immediate sources of enjoyment. It is a fact out of question, that we may train ourselves to find enjoyment in those toils and privations which are to others sources of disgust and sorrow. Who has not thrilled as he read of the author, who, oppressed with cares, infirmities, and years, took leave of a book, the result of the most laborious and protracted study, that was to be published only after his death, with a pleasant ode of thankfulness to it, as having furnished him agreeable occupation, and beguiled years of sorrow and pain ? On this subject I, too, can speak experimentally. I have often experienced an inward conscious satisfaction in realizing the pleasure and enjoyment which I found in the same pursuits and labours, which were the most painful drudgery to others equally qualified to pursue them with myself. The bee extracts honey from the same flower which to the spider yields only poison.

Nothing but experience can teach us to what extent force of character, and a capacity without cowardly shrinking to face danger, pain, and death, may be acquired. Compare, for example, a militia-man torn from the repose of his retreat, and forced into immediate battles, with the same person in the same predicament, when he shall have become a trained veteran. Compare the only child of weak, fond, and opulent parents, as he is seen in the hour of apprehended shipwreck, or of fierce conflict with the enemy,

with the sailor-boy born in the same vicinity, but compelled by the rough discipline of poverty, to encounter the elements, and the aspect of danger and death from boyhood.

I shall take occasion hereafter, to remark on the stubborn and invincible apathy of the red men of our forests, in the endurance of slow fire, and all the forms of torture which the ingenuity of Indian revenge can devise. I no longer trace this apparent insensibility to pain and fear, as I formerly did, to a more callous frame, and nerves of obtuser feeling. I see in it the astonishing result of their institutions, and the influence of public opinion upon them. In the same connexion I shall remark upon the testimony which the conduct of martyrs bears to the same point. Place a sufficient motive before the sufferer, and the proper witnesses around him, and he may be disciplined to endure any thing, without showing a subdued spirit. The most timid woman will not shrink from a surgical operation, when those she loves and respects surround her and applaud her courage. Leave her alone with the surgeon, and the very sight of his instrument will produce shrieks and faintings. The mad person who leaped the Genesee falls, fell a victim to the influence which encouraged vanity and ambition exert upon their subjects to spur him on to any degree of daring. If the right application of a motive so little worthy as the mere gratification of a moment's vanity, can harden the spirit for such attempts, what might not be effected by a discipline wisely guided by a simple purpose, to impart force, energy, and unshaking courage, to meet and vanquish the inevitable evils of life? To me there is nothing incredible in the story of the Spartan boy who had stolen the fox, and allowed the animal, while concealed under his mantle, to tear his entrails rather than, by uttering a groan, to commit his character for hardihood and capability of adroit thieving. Parents, your children will be compelled to encounter fatigue, privation, and pain, under any circumstances in which they can be placed. You can easily pamper them to an effeminacy that will shrink from any effort, and, if I may so quote, "to die of a rose, in aromatic pain;" to be feeble, timid, repining, and yet voluptuous. You can as easily teach them to find pleasure in labour, and in the sentiment of that force of mind with

which they can firmly meet pain, privation, danger, and death. Train them for the world in which they are destined to live. Teach them to *quit themselves like men, and be strong.*

Note 10, page 52.

It is impossible to present a better summary of the essentials of happiness. As the author remarks, they are difficult to unite. Yet, whoever lacks either, must be peculiarly unfortunate or indulgent to himself, if he cannot trace the want to some aberration or neglect of his own. Health, perhaps, is the least within our power; for, by the fault of our ancestors, we may have inherited a constitution and temperament essentially vitiated and unhealthy. We may lose health by casualty or by the influence of causes utterly beyond our knowledge or our control. But for one person thus afflicted with want of health, it is notorious that a hundred are so from causes which they may trace to their own mismanagement. Tranquillity of mind is certainly a frame on which we have a controlling influence. Whoever in our country has not competence, must assuredly seek the cause, if he have health, in his own want of industry or management. Most of the complaints of the caprice, infidelity, and unworthiness of friends, would have a more equitable application to our own want of temper, truth, and disinterestedness. These things, indispensable to happiness, are far more subject to our command, than our self-flattery will allow us to imagine. The greater portion of those about us, might unite all these advantages. Yet, if all misery, other than that which arises from want of being able to unite all these numerous and difficult requisites to happiness, were abstracted from human nature, I am confident that a moiety of the sorrows of earth would be removed; in other words, that a philosophic pursuit of happiness, would at once deliver us from more than half of our suffering here below.

Note 11, page 61.

The memory of almost every person who has been present at a funeral, attended by a protestant minister of a certain class, will

furnish him with recollections of these preposterous harangues of attempted consolation. The mourners are instructed that it is sinful to grieve; that grief implies want of faith in the great truths of the gospel; that Christianity forbids it; and, more than all, that it argues doubt of the happiness of the deceased; or a murmuring want of submission to the Divine will. Such doctrines, in the minds of weak and superstitious mourners, who feel that it is not in their power to repress grief, inspire painful distrust and self-reproach; and, in men more disciplined in the ways of the world, and more acquainted with human nature, contempt for the ignorant folly or gross hypocrisy of the disclaimer. The unchanging constitution of human nature revolts at such maxims. Whoever affects to be insensible to the loss of a child, relative, or friend, is either a stranger to his own perceptions, practises deceit, or has no heart to be grieved. Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of tenderness, and forbids the indulgence of no inherent emotion of our nature within its proper limits. It is most absurd of all, to suppose that God has forbidden, or interprets as murmurs, the sorrows that we feel from his stroke. There are few persons so disinterested, even if they were assured beyond a doubt, that the person they mourn is happy, as not to grieve at the final earthly severance, which cuts off the accustomed communion of heart, and interdicts the mourner from the sight and participation of that happiness. The cause of Christianity has suffered beyond calculation, from the exaggeration of its requirements by weak enthusiasts, or designing bigots. Distorted views and impracticable requisitions, have disgusted more persons with the system of the gospel, than Huine's argument against miracles, or all the sophistry of unbelief. The gospel takes into view the whole nature of man, and all its precepts announce, *Nolumus leges naturæ mutari—we will that the laws of nature should not be changed.*

Note 12, page 63.

It is not necessary to recur to the history of great revolutions to furnish the most impressive examples of human vicissitudes and instability. The Latin poet had reason for his maxim, who said,

“ *Si fortuna juvat caveto tolli ;  
Si fortuna tonat caveto mergi.*”

Life in every country, and in all time, has been full of affecting instances of the young, beautiful, endowed, and opulent, struck down in the brightest presage of their dawn. That is the true philosophy which draws, from continual exposure to these blows, a motive, to make the most, in the way of innocent enjoyment, of the period that is in our power.

Note 13, page 64.

This beautiful painting furnishes an impressive emblem of the capability of the human constitution, corporeal and mental, to assimilate itself to any change ; and of becoming insensible, by habit, to any degree of uniform endurance. Those fanatics in the early ages of the church, preposterously called saints, and others like them, professing all forms of religion that may still be found in the oriental countries, who sit for years on a pillar under the open sky, or curve themselves into a half circle, and remain in that position until their forms grow to it, shortly cease to feel much uneasiness in a posture which becomes habitual. To restore them to their original forms, after nature has affixed her seal of consent to the distortion, would probably cause as much pain as was requisite to acquire the habit. We have all read the affecting tale of the prisoner released from the Bastile after a confinement of more than a quarter of a century. He found the ordinary pursuits and intercourse of life insupportable, and begged to be restored to his dungeon. This is a most important aspect of the nature of man, which parents and instructors have as yet scarcely taken into view in their efforts to mould the youthful character. Children can as easily be formed to be Spartans as Sybarites ; and, in the former case, they not only acquire the noble attributes of courage and force of character, but contract habits of patient and manly endurance, furnishing a better shield against the ills of life, than any in the command of opulence or foresight.

## Note 14, page 67.

"Fate leads the willing, drags the unwilling on," and the single question is, by which of these processes would we choose to meet our lot? No doctrine of the true philosophy lies so obviously on the surface, as the wisdom of resignation; the disposition, in the exercise of which, more than in any other, a wise man differs from the million of murmuring and repining beings about him, who are madly struggling with the inexorable powers of nature, and doubting their evils by this useless and painful resistance. When we can no longer either evade or resist fortune, we can, at least, half disarm her by a calm and manly resignation.

## Note 15, page 71.

The instinctive sentiment of the love of country and home is beautifully described in these paragraphs. In health and good fortune, the amusements and distractions of life, may keep this sentiment out of sight. But "*dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos*" is the feeling with which most strangers die in a foreign land. In every heart rightly constituted, the moment the absence of adventitious pleasures forces the mind back upon itself, the instinctive feeling resumes its original force. It seems to me always an unfavourable trait in the character of an emigrant from abroad, that he is disposed to speak unfavourably of his native country, or does not seem to prefer it to all others. God has wrought into the mind of every good man, a filial feeling towards his native country.

## Note 15, page 71.

None of the sentiments and maxims of M. Droz, have been more severely censured, than those of the succeeding paragraphs. I am as little disposed to inculcate an indolent philosophy, as any other person. These views seem peculiarly unfitted for the genius of our country, where every thing respires as it ought, energy, industry, a fixed purpose, and a keen pursuit. That such are the requirements of our institutions, is a truth too strongly forced upon

us by the order of every thing in our country, to require any other proof. I would be the last person to feel disposed to recommend a philosophy which would tend to quench that busy and daring spirit which is the most striking characteristic of our nation. No elevation or opulence among us can dispense with a definite pursuit. So forcibly is every citizen reminded of this by all he sees about him, that without a pursuit, no one among us can sustain his own self-respect. He who courts seclusion and retirement, on the principles of the author, is obliged, even in his retirement, to keep himself engaged. He must devote himself to agriculture, manufactures, or some other absorbing pursuit.

It is hardly necessary to add, that no American is in danger of subscribing to his disqualifying views of the law, or any other profession. A freeman ought to hold, that he can confer respectability upon whatever pursuit circumstances may impel him to follow. Happily, no harm would result in our country, from the dislike of the author to the law. By what seems to me an unhappy general consent among us, the law is absorbing in the temptations that it offers to our young men. It is the prescribed avenue to all honour and place. All our functionaries must have passed into the temple of power and fame through this portico. Hence it is, and probably long will be, thronged by a great corps of supernumeraries. I would certainly be the last, not to think respectfully of the profession; but still I dislike to see so many of our aspiring young men crowding into it, to meet inevitable disappointment.

But critics will moderate their strictures upon the author, when they call to mind, that although there is no such class as people of leisure in our country, it constitutes a great and powerful one in France, perhaps greater in proportion than any other country. The chief application of these paragraphs must be to men of that condition, of whom the better class make literature at once their amusement and pursuit. For such, these are, probably, the wisest and best precepts that could be given. The whole of that part of this chapter which inculcates an inactive retirement, is altogether calculated for another meridian than that of our country. I have entirely omitted some of the passages, as not only of erroneous

general tendency, but altogether inapplicable to any order of things among us. But admitting this, and a few other trifling exceptions, I have been astonished at the charges which have been brought against the moral tendency of the general opinions of M. Droz.

Note 16, page 75.

This short chapter upon health, seems to me full of the soundest practical wisdom. Every one must be aware, that the wise pursuit of happiness must be preceded by the preserving of health. The wise ancients justly made the *mens sana in corpore sano*, to be the condition, if not the essence of human happiness. Most treatises upon health have oppressed the subject by too many, and too intricate rules. It would be difficult to add to the author's precepts, brief as they are, so far as they relate to the moral and intellectual regimen necessary to health. I add a remark or two, touching some physical appliances that should be appended to the moral rules.

So far as my reading and observation extend, there are but three circumstances which have almost invariably accompanied health and longevity. The favoured persons have lived in elevated rather than in low and marshy positions; have been possessed of a tranquil and cheerful temperament, and active habits, and have been early risers.

It is related, that the late King George the Third, who made the causes of longevity a subject of constant investigation, procured two persons, each considerably over a hundred years of age, to dance in his presence. He then requested them to relate to him their modes of living, that he might draw from them, if possible, some clue to the causes of their vigorous old age. The one had been a shepherd remarkably temperate and circumspect in his diet and regimen; the other a hedger, equally noted for the irregularity, exposure, and intemperance of his life. The monarch could draw no inference to guide his inquiries, from such different modes of life, terminating in the same result. On further inquiry, he learned, that they were alike distinguished by a tranquil easiness of temper, active habits, and early rising.

After all the learned modern expositions of the causes of dyspepsia, I suspect that not one in a thousand is aware how much temperance and moderation in the use of food, conduce to health. There are very few among us who do not daily consume twice the amount of food necessary to satisfy the requisitions of nature. The redundant portion must weigh as a morbid and unconcocted mass upon the wheels of life. Every form of alcohol is unquestionably a poison, slow or rapid, in proportion to the excess in which it is used. Disguise it as we may, be the pretexts of indulgence as ingenious and plausible as inclination and appetite can frame, it retains its intrinsic tendencies under every sophistication. Wine, in moderation, is, doubtless, less deleterious than any of its disguises. In declining age, and in innumerable cases of debility, it may be indicated as a useful remedy; but even here, only as a less evil to countervail a greater. Pure water, all other circumstances equal, is always a healthier beverage for common use. Next to temperance, a quiet conscience, a cheerful mind, and active habits, I place early rising as a means of health and happiness. I have hardly words for the estimate which I form of that sluggard, male or female, that has formed the habit of wasting the early prime of day in bed.—Laying out of the question the positive loss of life, the *magna pars dempta solido de die*, and that too of the most inspiring and beautiful part of the day, when all the voices of nature invoke man from his bed, leaving out of the calculation, that longevity has been almost invariably attended by early rising; to me, late hours in bed present an index to character, and an omen of the ultimate hopes of the person who indulges in this habit. There is no mark so clear of a tendency to self-indulgence. It denotes an inert and feeble mind, infirm of purpose, and incapable of that elastic vigour of will, which enables the possessor always to accomplish what his reason ordains. The subject of this unfortunate habit, cannot but have felt self-reproach, and a purpose to spring from his repose with the freshness of the dawn. If the mere indolent luxury of another hour of languid indulgence is allowed to carry it over this better purpose, it argues a general weakness of character, which promises no high attainment or distinction.—These are never awarded by

fortune to any trait, but vigour, promptness, and decision. Viewing the habit of late rising, in many of its aspects, it would seem as if no being that has any claim to rationality, could be found in the allowed habit of sacrificing a tenth, and that the most pleasant and spirit-stirring portion of life, at the expense of health, and the curtailing of the remainder, for any pleasure which this indulgence could confer.

Note 17, page 78.

From personal experience, and no inconsiderable range of observation, I am convinced that the author has by no means overrated the influence of imagination upon health and disease. It is indeed astonishing, at this late period, when every physiologist and physician is ready to proclaim his own recorded observations upon the medicinal influence of the moral powers, the passions, and especially the imagination, that so few medical men have thought it an object to employ them as elements of actual application. Hitherto these unknown and undefined powers of life and death have been in the hands of empirics, jugglers, mountebanks, and pretended dispensers of miraculous healing. It is, at the same time, matter of regret, that scientific physicians, instead of questioning their undeniably cures, and pouring attempted ridicule upon them, have not separated the true from the false, and sought access to the real fountain of the efficacy of their practice, the employment of confident faith, hope, and the unlimited agency of the all-pervading power of the imagination. Many physicians are sufficiently wise, and endowed with character, to exercise circumspection in giving their opinions, and pronouncing upon the prognostics of their patients. They regulate their words, countenance, and deportment, with a caution and prudence which speak volumes in regard to their conviction of the influence which imprudence in these points might have.

In fact, it is only necessary to observe the intense and painful earnestness with which the patient and the friends watch his countenance and behaviour, to be aware what an influence may be thus exerted. It is only requisite to understand with what prying

anxiety the sick man questions those around him, what the physician thinks and predicts of his case, to make him sensible how vigilantly he should be on his guard, in spending his judgment rashly in the case. All this negative wisdom in the application of moral means, is sufficiently common. Not to possess it in a considerable degree, would indicate a physician unacquainted with the most common etiquette of a sick chamber.

But, as yet, we see the positive employment of these means almost wholly interdicted by custom to regular physicians. We contend for their exercise only within the limits of the most scrupulous veracity, and the most severe discretion. What powers would he not exert, who, snatching these moral means from the hands of empirics, and who, to thorough acquaintance with all that can be known in regard to physical means, should join the wise and discriminating aid of an imagination creating a healing world of hope and confidence about the patient? Such a benefactor of our species will, ere long, arise, who will introduce a new era into medicine.

Who can doubt that implicit faith in the healing powers of prince Hohenloe, may have wrought cures, even in cases of paralysis, without the least necessity for introducing the vague and misapplied term, a miracle; or, that some out of many persons in an asylum of paralytics, would find themselves able to fly when bombs fell upon the roof of their receptacle?

The influence of a vigorous will upon the physical movements of our frame has scarcely been conjectured, much less submitted to the scrutiny of experiment. Yet it would be easy, I think, to select innumerable cases, where, by its means, men have exerted powers previously unknown to themselves. We see the immediate application of almost superhuman energy upon the access of frenzy to the patient; and this affords conclusive proof, that, upon the addition of the due amount of excitement, the body and mind become capable of incredible exertions, and yet sink into infantine debility the moment that the excitement is withdrawn. Every one has been made aware of what mere resolution can do in sustaining the frame in cases of cold, exposure, hunger, and exhaustion. All these instances are only different forms of proof, which

might be multiplied indefinitely, of the agency of moral powers upon physical nature. Under similar influences, omens, and predictions, in weak and superstitious minds, become adequate causes of their own completion. Since perfect knowledge alone can deliver the mind from more or less susceptibility of this influence, it is important that it should be wisely directed to bear, as far as it may, upon the imagination, in kindling it to confidence, cheerfulness, and hope.

Note 18, page 81.

“ Why drew Marseilles’ good bishop purer breath,  
When the air sickened, and each gale was death?”

Because he was sustained by a cheerful reliance upon Providence, a firm determination to do his duty, and have no fear of consequences. The whole scope of my own observation beside the sick bed, perfectly coincides with these views. I do not say that there are not numberless exceptions. But of this I am confident, that the general rule is, that persons who attend the sick and dying, in cases of epidemic disease of a mortal type, with a fearless and cheerful mind, escape; while the timid, who are alarmed, and have an implicit belief in the danger of contagion, succumb.

Note 19, page 85.

If there ever was an age when invalids and the suffering might promise themselves sympathy in the dolorous detail of their symptoms, which is questionable, it certainly is not now, during the era of labour-saving machinery, political economy, and the all-engrossing influence of money and corporate achievement. He who now suffers from acute pain in any form, will do wisely to summon all his strength and philosophy, to suppress any manifestation in his countenance and muscles, rather than task his eloquence in framing his tale of symptoms.

This whole chapter upon health abounds in the highest practical wisdom, and the hints in it might easily be expanded to a volume. I only add, that I earnestly recommend a poem upon

the same subject, one, as it seems to me, among the most classical and beautiful in our language, and which has become strangely and undeservedly obsolete—Dr. Armstrong's Art of Health.

Note 20, page 85.

How often have similar thoughts pressed upon my mind, as I have stood over the bed of the sick and dying! Here is the peculiar empire of minds truly and nobly benevolent, where the head and main prop of a family is preparing to conflict with the last enemy: where pain and groans, terror and death, fill the foreground, and the dim but inevitable perspective of desolation, struggle, and want, in contact with indifference and selfishness, opens in the distance before the survivors. Let us thank God for religion. Philosophy may inculcate stern endurance and wise submission; but knows not a fit and adequate remedy. The hopes and the example imparted by him *who went about doing good*, are alone sufficient for the relief of such cases, of which, alas! our world is full.

Note 21, page 88.

No view of human life is more consoling or just than that presented in these paragraphs. Yet no human calculation will ever reach the sum of agony that has been inflicted by the jealousy, envy, and heart-burning that have resulted from that most erroneous persuasion, that certain conditions and circumstances of life bring happiness in themselves. Beautifully has the Bible said, that "God has set one thing over against another"—has balanced the real advantages of the different human conditions. The result of my experience would leave me in doubt and at a loss in selecting the condition which I should deem most congenial to happiness. I should have to balance abundance of food, on the one hand, against abundance of appetite, on the other; the habit super-induced by the necessity of being satisfied with a little, with the habit of being disgusted with the trial of much. There are joys, numerous and vivid, peculiar to the rich; and others, in which

none but those in the humbler conditions of life can participate. In the whole range of the enjoyment of the senses, if there be any advantage, it belongs to the poor. The laws of our being have surrounded the utmost extent of human enjoyment with adamantine walls, which one condition can no more overleap than another. It is wonderful to see this admirable adjustment, like the universal laws of nature, acting everywhere and upon everything. Even in the physical world, what is granted to one country is denied to another; and the wanderer who has seen strange lands and many cities, in different climes, only returns to announce, as the sum of his experience and the teaching of years, that light and shadow, comfort and discomfort, pleasure and pain, like air and water, are diffused in nearly similar measures over the whole earth.

Note 21, page 91.

It needs but little acquaintance with human condition to perceive, in the general adjustment of advantages settled by Providence, that great proportions of them have been thrown into opposite scales, and so contrasted that the selection of one class implies the rejection of the other. For example, smitten with the thousand temptations of wealth, you are determined to be rich. Be it so. Industry, frugality, and the convergence of your faculties to this single point will hardly fail to render you so. But then you will not be so absurd as to envy another the fame of talents and acquirements which required absorbing devotion to pursuits incompatible with yours.

You are rich, and complain of satiety and *ennui*. Knew you not, when you determined to be rich, that poor people sing and dance about their cabin fires? You have gained power and distinction, and discovered the heartless selfishness of your competitors and dependants. Were you ignorant that friendship can only be purchased by friendship; and that, in selecting your all-engrossing pursuit, you have precluded yourself from furnishing your quota of the reciprocity? The choices of life are alternatives. You may select from this scale, or that. But, in most cases, you cannot take from both. How much murmuring would be arrested

if this most obvious truth were understood and men would learn to be satisfied with their alternative! Choose wisely and deliberately; and then quietly repose on your choice. Say, "I have this; another has that. I am certain that I have my choice. I do not know but his condition was forced upon him."

Note 22, page 92.

If I have ever allowed myself the indulgence of envy, it is after having tasted the pleasure of rewarding merit, or relieving distress, in thinking how continually such celestial satisfactions are within the reach of the opulent. What a calm is left in the mind after having wiped away tears! What aspirations are excited in noting the joy and gratitude consequent upon misery relieved! How delightful to recur to the remembrance during the vigils of the night watches! How it expands the heart to reflect upon the consciousness of the all powerful and all good Being, measuring the circuit of the universe in doing good! Unhappily, the experience of all time demonstrates that the possession of opulence and power not only has no direct tendency to inspire increased sensibility to such satisfactions, but has an opposite influence. For one, rendered more kind and benevolent by good fortune, how many become callous, selfish, and proud by it! Kindly and wisely has Providence seen fit to spare most men this dangerous trial.

Note 23, page 94.

This chapter of the author, among the rest, has been obnoxious to severe strictures. I am sensible that the young require the exercise of cautious discretion in few questions more than in this, "How far is it wise to disregard public opinion?" To press the point too far is to incur the reputation of eccentricity and arrogant confidence in our own judgment. Implicitly to copy the expressions and habits of the multitude precludes all pursuit of happiness by system; and reduces the whole inquiry to the injunction, to walk with the rest, and add our *ennui* and disappointment to the

mass of the unhappiness of all those who have gone before. If certain modes appear to me, after the most deliberate examination, conducive to my happiness, why should I be deterred from adopting them, because I am not countenanced by the general opinion and example of a crowd, each individual of which I should altogether reject as a teacher and an example? If I avow that the ten thousand, in all time, have formed the most erroneous judgments, touching the wisdom of human pursuits, why should I continue blindly to copy their errors? He is certainly the most fortunate man who, if an exact account of his sensations and thoughts could be cast into a sum at his last hour, would be found to have enjoyed the greatest number of agreeable moments, pleasurable sensations and happy reflections. If to court retirement, repose, the regulation of the desires and passions, and the cultivation of those affections which are best nurtured in the shade, be the most certain route to happiness, why should I be swayed from choosing that path by the suggestions of ambition, avarice, and the spirit of the world, which enjoin the common course?

Yet every one is, more or less, a slave to the prevalent fashions of thinking and acting. How much vile hypocrisy does this slavery, which covers the face of society with a vast mask of semblance, engender! Contemplate the routine of all the professions which we make and infringe in a single day, in the manifest violation of our inward thought and belief; and we must admit that the world agrees to enact a general lie, alike deceiving and deceived, through terror of being the first to revolt against the thraldom of opinion. The very persons, too, who cherish the profoundest secret contempt for the judgment of the multitude, are generally the loudest and the first in decrying any departure from the standard of public opinion almost as an immorality.

I would by no means desire to see those most dear to me arrogantly setting at defiance received ideas and usages. These have, as the author justly remarks, a salutary moral sway in repressing the influence of the impudent and abandoned. I am not insensible to the danger of following our independent judgment beyond the limits of a regulated discretion. But there is no trait in the young for which I feel a more profound respect, than the

fixed resolve to consult their own light, in setting the rules of their conduct and selecting their alternatives. A calm and reflecting independence, an unshaken firmness in encountering vulgar prejudices, is what I admire as the evidence of strong character, fearless thinking, and capability of self-direction.

Note 24, page 101.

How often must every reflecting mind have been led to similar views of human nature! To form just estimates and entertain right sentiments of our kind, we must not contemplate men under the action of the narrowness of sectarian hate, or through the jaundiced vision of party feeling. We must see them in positions like those so happily presented by the author, when great and sweeping calamities level men to the consciousness and the sympathies of a common nature, and a sense of common exposure to misery, and open the fountains of generous feeling. Who has not seen men, on such occasions, forget their pride, their miserable questions of rank and precedence, and meet with open arms and the mingled tears of gratitude and relief, persons, the view of whom under other circumstances, would have called forth only feelings of scornful comparison and reckless contempt?

The incident of the hostile French and German posts is a singularly touching one. In what a horrid light does it place the character and passions of princes, generals, conquerors, and warriors, in all time, who, for their measureless cupidity or the whim of their ambition, have used these amiable beings, formed with natural sympathies to aid and love each other, as the mechanical engines of their purposes, to meet breast to breast as enemies, and plunge the murderous steel into each other's hearts! Hence, rivers of life blood have flowed as uselessly as rain falls upon the ocean! It is difficult to determine whether we ought most to execrate the accursed ambition of the few, or despise the weak stupidity of the many who have been led, unresistingly, like animals to the slaughter, only the more firmly to rivet the chains of the survivors. What a view does war present, of the miserable ignorance, the brute stupidity of the mass of the species, and the

detestable passions of those called the great, in all time! Who does not exult to see the era, every day approaching, when men will be too wise, too vigilant and careful of their rights to become instruments in the hands of others; when the rational consciousness of their own predominant physical power shall be guided by wisdom, self-watchfulness, and self-respect? Then, instead of being tamely led out to slay each other, when invoked to this detestable sport of kings, they will show their steel to their oppressors.

Note 24, page 102.

I am as much impressed with the eloquence of this passage as with its truth. I reserve more particular views of religion for comments on the letter upon the subject. I wish to present in this place, as consonant with the spirit of this passage, one view of religion which has long been one of my most fixed and undoubting conclusions. It is, that man is a religious being, by the organic constitution of his frame, still more than by any intellectual process of reasoning. I have no doubt, that a rightly organized and well endowed man, born and reared in a desert isle, without ever being brought into contact with man or any discipline to call forth reason or speech, would be subject to precisely the same emotions as, varied and moulded by the circumstances of birth and education, constitute the substance of all the religions in the world; in other words, that man is constituted a religious animal in the same way as he clearly is an animal with other instincts and passions. I am aware, that divines and moralists do not often insist upon the religious instinct, as one of the most conclusive and convincing arguments (to me, at least,) of the soul's immortality. It seems with them the favourite view to consider religion a science that may be taught, like geometry or chemistry.

To me, this absorbing subject presents a very different aspect. I see man everywhere religious in some form. The sentiment takes the moulding of his accidental circumstances. It is poetry, enthusiasm, eloquence, bravery; but in every form an aspiration after the vast, illimitable, eternal, shadowy conceptions of an un-

known hereafter, that the senses have not embodied. It is rational or fanciful, it is respectable or superstitious, it is a pure abstraction or a gorgeous appeal to the senses, according to one's country, training, and temperament. But man, whether he be a dweller in the far isles of the sea, or in the crowded mart, whether christian or savage, is everywhere found, in some form, invoking a God and reposing the hopes and affections of his worn heart in another and a better world; and extending his faith to an immortal life and an eternal sphere of action

Instead of searching for this universal principle with metaphysicians, pronouncing upon it with dogmatists, or deducing it from creeds, or creeds from it, I behold in it the same unwritten revelation which we call instinct. Vague and undefined as is this law, and questioned by some as is even its existence, it announces to us one of the most impressive and beautiful homilies upon the truth and goodness of the Author of our being. It may be called the scripture of the lower orders, guiding them, with unerring certainty, to their enjoyments and their end. Beasts feel it, and graze the plain. Birds feel it, and soar in the air. Fishes feel it, and dart along their liquid domain; each feeding, moving, resting, playing and perpetuating its kind, according to its organic laws. Winter comes upon the gregarious tribes of water fowls enjoying themselves in the Canadian lakes. They listen to this call from heaven, and mount the autumnal winds, and, without chart or compass, by a course to which that of circumnavigators is devious, they sail to the shores of the south, where a softer atmosphere and new supplies of food await them. It leads the young one of these animals, scarcely yet disengaged from the shell, to patter its bill in the dry sand, impatiently to search for water before it has yet seen it. It creates in the new born infant a purpose to search for its supplies in the yet untasted fountains of the maternal bosom. It guides all the lower orders of being through the whole mysterious range of their peculiar habits and modes of life. Under its influence, animals and men exercise powers which transcend the utmost efforts of our reason. Who can tell me why the duckling plunges into the water with the shell on its head? Who can inform me how the affectionate house dog, blindfolded and conveyed

in utter darkness in a carriage to a distance of fifty leagues, the moment he is emancipated, returns by a more direct route than that by which he came? There would be no use in presenting the most extended details of these developments of instinct through the whole range of animated nature. Every one knows that wherever we discern them, either in the structure or habits of the animal, or both, they are indications of unerring guidance, the voice of eternal and unswerving truth, which, as soon as promulgated, is received as the parental counsel of the Author of nature.

He who could interpret the language and the gestures of the lower orders would see in the structure and manifested wants of fishes, that water was provided as a home for them, had he seen them in the air. When he had noted the movements and heard the cries of the new born infant, he would be in no doubt, that the nutriment in the maternal bosom was stored for it somewhere. Seeing the structure, the starting pinions and plumage of the unfledged bird in its nest, he could be at no loss in reasoning, that as these indications of contrivance for other modes of life were lost in its present manner of existence, it was intended for movements, where pinions and plumage would avail it.

As certain as these instincts and indications are the pledged verity of the Author of nature, that a sphere is provided for the exercise of these undeveloped powers, and a corresponding gratification for these instinctive desires, so sure as they point out, in a language, which can neither deceive nor be mistaken, the aim and end of the animal to which they belong, so sure, if religion be an instinctive sentiment, and the hope, and the persuasion of another existence result from the organic constitution of our nature, there must be another life. That it is so, the usages and modes of all people that have yet been known, the people of the first ages and the last, the people of the highest refinement, and those who scarcely know the use of fire, have concurred to prove to us. Superficial travellers, indeed, have told us of newly discovered tribes, who had no visions of a God—a worship, or an hereafter. Other travellers have followed them, and observed

better, and discovered, that their predecessors based the fact on their own ignorance. They have been found to belong to the general analogy, and to look to

"Some happier land in depth of woods embraced ;  
Some lovelier island in the watery waste."

It seems to me, that this universal agreement of religious ideas is the most unequivocal manifestation, that the sentiment of religion is an instinct, that is exhibited in the whole range of animated nature. If so, it is the offered pledge of the divine veracity, that the soul is immortal; and that as certain as the instinct of migrating birds is proof that the milder skies which they seek exist, and are prepared for them, so surely the undeveloped powers of the spirit, which have no range on the earth, have a country prepared also for them. Our aspirations, our *longings after immortality*, every mode of worship, and every form of faith —are the rudiments, the germs, the starting pinions of the embryo spirit, which is to escape from its nest at death, and fly in the celestial atmosphere, in which it was formed to move.

To me these universal religious manifestations are proofs that religion springs not, as some suppose, from tradition; or, as others think, from reasoning. It is a sentiment. It is an inwrought feeling in our mental constitution, an unwritten, universal, and everlasting gospel, pointing to God and immortality. Bring the most uninstructed peasant, who has seen nothing of the earth, but its plains, in sight of Chimborazo. The thrill of awe and sublimity, that springs within him at the view, and lifts his spirit above the blue summits to the divinity, is one of the forms in which this sentiment acts. The natural mental movements, in view of the illimitable main, of the starry firmament, of elevated mountains, of whatever is vast in dimension, irresistible in power, terrible in the exercise of anger, in short, all those emotions, which we call the sublime, are modified actings of the religious sentiment. Justly has the author pronounced the universality of these ideas the highest testimony to the elevation of human nature. It is the most impressive and interesting attribute of the soul, that it is subject to these impulses. It is a standing

index, that the godlike stranger, imprisoned in clay, has, in-wrought in its consciousness, indelible impressions of its future destiny.

Note 25, page 104.

Whoever philosophically considers the constitution of the human mind—how much we are the creatures of our circumstances, how much we are blown about by impulse and passion, the dimness of our own mental vision upon most subjects, the narrow limit, which separates between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, and moreover, that we ourselves view everything through the colouring of our own pride and prejudice—will perceive at once, that, under all circumstances of error and even of crime, men are quite as worthy of pity, as of vindictive blame. A little, cold, and selfish mind invariably finds much matter for bitter censure in every act that, according to its own chart, is an aberration. On the contrary, nothing, in my estimate, so decidedly marks a generous and noble, as well as an enlightened and a philosophic spirit, as the disposition to be indulgent in its construction of the views and conduct of others, and to interpret all by the comment of palliation and kindness, whenever the case will admit of them. Great minds fail not to be conscious what a weak, miserable compound of vanity, impulse, ignorance, and selfishness is that lord of creation, that passive moulding of circumstances, which we call man. Of course in calmly scanning his views and conduct, all other sensations than those of pity and kindness, die away within him. As the human mind is exalted by its light, and its intrinsic elevation towards the divinity, in the same proportion it soars above the mists of its own passions and prejudices, and sees little in humanity to inspire other feelings than those of compassion and benevolence. What is the view of human nature presented to a wise and good man?

“ ‘Tis but to know how little can be known,  
To see all others’ faults, and feel our own.”

Note 26, page 105.

I am not certain that the real spirit of tolerance has made so

much progress in this age as is commonly imagined. Who among us admits in practice, as well as theory, that the mind is passive in receiving evidence, and forming conclusions, which it cannot shape, except according to impressions, which it has much less power to exclude, or evade, than is generally believed? Who among us acts on the conviction, that errors of opinion are almost invariably involuntary? Every view of human nature, and the laws of the human mind ought to inspire us with an unlimited feeling of tolerance towards those who differ from us in opinion, howsoever widely. We cannot fail so to feel, if we reflect that, had we been in their situation, and under their circumstances, and they in ours, our views might have been reversed. Yet it is scarcely possible to converse with any one a few moments, without starting them by some opposing opinion that jars with their excited feelings, and a certain amount of estrangement is the result. Who can conduct a disputed point, in politics or religion, with an unruffled temper? Angry disputation is only another form of intolerance. If we narrowly inspect the actings of human nature, we shall discover, that the whole world is composed of individuals, almost every one of whom thinks he has a right to be offended with every other one, who does not adopt his opinions.

It is very true, that the age of actual persecution, by fines, imprisonment, and death, is gone by. But this results rather from practical political progress of ideas, than from a settled conviction that no one mind has a right to find, in the opinions of another mind, cause of offence. Whoever cannot look upon the most opposite faith and opinions of his neighbour, in religion, in politics, and the ordinary concerns of life, without any feeling of temper and bitterness, in view of that difference, is in heart and spirit intolerant. In this view, who can justly and fully lay claim to toleration? The whole world is divided into millions of little parties and sects, often finding the bitterest germs of contention in the smallest differences. Scarcely one in ten thousand, of all these sects and parties, has real philosophic magnanimity enough to perceive, that all other men have as much claim for indulgence to their opinions as he exacts for his own.

## Note 27, page 105.

It would be amusing, if such important consequences did not flow from the error, to perceive, how much weight most people attach to the sect and party to which the persons, about whom they are forming an estimate, belong. The externals, the deportment, dress and manner are often strongly influenced by these matters; but the mental complexion or temperament far less than is commonly supposed. We meet with people, every day, of the most exclusive and bigoted creeds, who act liberally: and again with people, who have much liberality and catholicism in their mouths, and very little in their temper and spirit. I have met with liberal and illiberal people, in almost equal proportions, in all the sects, parties, and denominations with which I have been acquainted. Still I do not, as from these remarks it might be inferred that I do, deem error, even in abstract opinions, such as those which appertain to religious and metaphysical subjects, as of no consequence. But I have not time, nor have I place, in a note, for explaining my convictions on this subject.

## Note 27, page 107.

An indiscreet and exaggerating zeal often injures the cause it would wish to serve. The gospel is best sustained by its own unborrowed glory, and is prejudiced by adventitious appendages. I have often heard ministers declare from the pulpit, that the duty of forgiveness, and of loving and doing good to enemies was a peculiar discovery of the gospel, a precept unknown before. We have never considered it among the objects of the mission of our Lord, to reveal a new code of morals. The grand eternal principles of this science were originally engraven on the heart. Man could not have existed in society without them. Whoever has read the elaborate and eloquent treatises of heathen moralists, will perceive, that there was little left incomplete in the code; and that these sublime virtues were eulogized, as beautiful and just in theory, if not to be expected in practice. It is the spirit, unction, and tenderness of gospel inculcation, that is unique and original.

The heathen ethical writers had not failed to enjoin it upon the members of communities, to aid and love one another. But it is only necessary to glance upon the apostolic epistles, to see that Christians were a new and peculiar people, bound together by cords of affection, altogether unknown in the previous records of the human heart. What tenderness, what love, *stronger than death*, what sublime disinterestedness! How reckless to the sordid motives of ambition and interest, which ruled the surrounding world! We scarcely need other evidence that this simplicity of love, so unlike aught the world had seen before, was not an affection of earthly mould; and that this new and strong people were not bound together by ties which had relation to the grossness of earthly bonds. To me there is something inexpressibly delightful, and of which I am never weary, in contemplating the originality and simplicity of early Christian affection, nor is it one of the feeblest testimonies to the glory and divinity of the gospel.

For the rest, I have much abridged the paragraphs to which this note alludes, and have interpolated some expressions, not found in the original, because I would not allow myself to leave anything equivocal, touching my own views of the importance of Christian morals and example.

It would be useless to add to the beautiful views, presented by the author, of the disposition to oblige, and the necessity of cultivating modesty, and an equal and serene temper. One cannot enlarge upon these beaten topics, as he has foreseen, without running into common-places. These virtues are pre-eminently their own reward. Whoever chooses to indulge the opposite tempers has only to reflect, that he assumes the thankless office of becoming a self-tormentor, and injures no one so much as himself. Of these fierce passions, the heathen poets have given us an affecting emblem in the undying vultures, gnawing upon the ever growing entrails of Tityus. If you would form the sublimest conceptions of the eternal and underived satisfaction of the divinity, cultivate dispositions to oblige, and seize occasions to practise beneficence. If you would image more impressive ideas of the torment of demons than poets have dreamed, muse upon injuries; cultivate envy and revenge, and wish that you had the bolts of the

thunderer, only that you might hurl them upon your foes. If you would experience the eternal gnawing of the vulture allow yourself in the constant indulgence of your temper.

Note 28, page 112.

To those who have already assumed this tie, or contemplate assuming it, not a word need be said upon the most worn of all themes, the paramount influence of marriage, beyond all other relations, in imparting the colouring of brightness or gloom to all subsequent life. The place in which the only satisfactions of life, that are worth any serious pursuit, are to be found, is within the domestic walls. Honour, fame, wealth, luxury, literary distinction, everything is extrinsic and hollow, everything the mere mockery and shadow of joy, but the comfort of a quiet and affectionate home. Whoever does not share this faith with me, will hardly be enlightened to the true sources of enjoyment by any lucubrations of mine. Instead of details and declamation upon this truth, I present an unvarnished, unexaggerated view, an abstract, if I may so say, of the circumstances under which the greater number of marriages are consummated in our country, and, I imagine, in most civilized countries. It may not embrace the exact train of the incidents connected with every case; but will serve, in the phrase of the makers of calendars, "without material variation," as an outline of the history of those courtships that terminate in matrimony. What wonder, that wedded life is so often unhappy!

I am compelled to believe, that very few marriages take place in consequence of such an intimate acquaintance of the parties with each other's unsophisticated and interior character, as to justify the chances of affection and domestic happiness. The first adverse circumstance is, that both are constantly on such a trial to make a show of wit, good temper, and manners, as to render the whole scene, from commencement to close, a drama, in which all is acting; in which there is no admission to the real life behind the scenes, until after marriage. How often does the actor or actress, who successfully personated a wit, and an angel, detect in

the other party a simpleton, a brute, or a termagant! The walk of life, in which they are found, may vary the shades, but it changes not the natural circumstances of a picture, which, in its broader features, applies alike to elevated and humble life.

The parties, in the bloom of life, in all the excitement of juvenile buoyancy, moving in the illumined atmosphere of imagination, meet at the party, ball-room, assembly, church, or other place of concourse, for which the young dress, to look around and be gazed upon. They are clad in their gayest, and stand on their best. No airs, or graces, that mothers, or friends, or society, or their *Chesterfield*, or their imaginations can suggest, are pretermitted. No attempted inflictions are spared from any relentings of mercy. Many gratuitous nods, and smiles, and remarks, and much odious affectation, inspired by the love of conquest, pass well enough in the tinsel illusion of the scene and circumstances. Accident brings the couple into contact. They sing, dance, walk, converse, or, in some of these ways, are thrown together. Or, perhaps, some officious mediator reports, to the one, flattering remarks made by the other. The first impulses to the acquaintance are those of vanity, and the instinctive attraction of persons, so situated, towards each other. A vague and momentary liking, which might be effaced as easily as mists vanish in the sun, is the result. The lady, from the delicacy of her organization, and the quickness of her perceptions, is the first aware of the new state of mutual feeling; and by conjoining a happy combination of coquetry, shyness, and encouragement, adds fuel to the kindling spark. They converse apart, and the masonic pressure of hands is interchanged. Compliments ensue, more or less polished and eloquent according to their native readiness, and artificial training. Vanity comes in with her legion of auxiliaries, and, in the same proportion as memory invests this intercourse with pleasant sensations and agreeable associations, conversation with other persons, between whom and themselves these processes have not commenced, becomes tasteless and irksome; and ennui in all other society does its part to put imagination in action. They find themselves weary and sad in separation. Fancy runs riot and begins to weave her fairy tissue, and to build her oriental

bowers. The parties are now in love, as they believe, and as the world pronounces. Now commence the hours of poetry and sentimentality; and the spring time of their new-born passion. Not a moment for discriminating observation of each other's character, has yet occurred.

The freshness of the vernal inclination acquires the fervour of settled and summer passion. The preliminaries of form are commenced; and under such associations, and with such mutual inclinations, incompatibility, unfitness, opposition of friends, all obstacles that are not absolutely insurmountable, disappear. What parent can resist the impassioned eloquence of a child, or contemplate for a moment the prospect of inflicting the agony of a disappointed and hopeless love! Have they measured each other's understanding and good sense? No: this requires a discrimination, for which in the fever, the delirium of the senses, they have no capacity. Know they aught of each other's worth and good temper? No. Lovers find nothing to jar their temper or try their disposition. Surrounded by a halo of imagination, every thing about them is invested with its brilliancy. The silliest remark of the *inamorata* sounds in the ears of the lover like the response of an oracle; and he is astonished and enraged that all others do not see and hear with him. Everything that is said becomes wisdom, and everything done noble and graceful. Who has not heard all these ascriptions, all these extravagant eulogies, applied to a fair female, uttering nothing, and incapable of uttering anything, but voluble and vapid nonsense; or worse, ebullitions of envy, detraction, and bad feeling! Meanwhile, the parties, enveloped in illusion, would not see real character, if they could; and could not, if they would. Is this extravagant, or exaggerated? Let the well-known fact, that sensible men oftener marry fools, and gifted women coxcombs, than otherwise, be received as evidence, that this great transaction is generally commenced, and terminated under a spell, in which the actors see nothing as it really is, and as it appears to disinterested spectators. After having united many hundred pairs myself, and seen all aspects of society, such seem to me the most common circumstances appended to the beginning, progress, and issue of courtship in its common forms.

When ambitious views, the lust of wealth, and purposes of aggrandizement, are the prompting incitements, the order of circumstances indeed may be essentially varied, without much altering the result. The excitement of the senses, and the illusions of the imagination, give place to these more sordid motives. They are, however, equally absorbing with the former. The faculties having converged to the point of cautious and keen speculation, allow no greater scope, and furnish no happier facilities for noting the development of understanding, character, and temper, than in the other predicament. The appetite for money, and the burning of ambition, may as effectually blind the aspirant to the silliness and bad temper of her who is seen through the flattering medium of his plans and his hopes, as could his vanity and his youthful inclinations. How can a person be expected to compare and discriminate traits, and the almost imperceptible lights and shades of character, whose whole mind is intensely concentrated on the chances of his speculation, the fear of rivals, the danger of mishap, and the means of hastening the issue? Who, under such circumstances, inquires about the elements of happiness or misery, the good sense, the regulated temper, the discretion, health, temperament, and habits, that appertain to the means by which a fortune and a name are to be obtained? These are passed by as subordinate considerations. Suppose inquiries, touching these points, to glance through the mind. Suppose the speculator to have lucid glimpses, and some startling premonitions of the importance of settled and discriminating views, in relation to these matters; contemplated through golden associations, and in the glare of ambitious hopes, they will be hardly likely to undergo a very severe or sifting scrutiny.

The marriage, whether of love, of ambition, of convenience, or mere animal impulse, takes place. The music and dancing are no more, and the brilliancy of the bridal torch is extinct, and with those physical paraphernalia, one mental illusion after another begins to melt into thin air. The discriminating faculties, judgment, and the critical vision, now become morbidly sensitive and severe, since satiety, and the extinction of fancy and the imagination have left these capacities to unchecked action, beholding the object of their scrutiny continually, and close at hand. The

medium becomes as unnaturally dark as it was unnaturally light before. A thousand circumstances, never dreamed of in the philosophy of love and courtship, crowd upon this disposition to cynical and bilious criticism. Manifestations of temper and character, that once indicated to the lover, amiability and intelligence, become, to the moody husband or the discontented wife, marks of a weak understanding and a bad heart; and in proportion as they nourish despondency and disappointment, they destroy the capability of indulgence and forbearance, and resist efforts to soothe, and correct, and conciliate.

In proportion as they become dissatisfied with each other, by a mental progress, exactly the reverse of that which brought them together, home is enveloped with associations of gloom. The imagination finds sunshine in every other place; and every other person is sensible and attractive, but the one they have sworn to love and honour until death.

There are those who will see in these revolting representations, a colouring of misanthropy; and pronounce this statement of the case harsh beyond nature. I would it were so; for, unless I deceive myself, I love my kind; and my only object is to impress upon the young the importance of inquiring, when contemplating this vital and all important transaction, whether they see things in the clear light of truth, and as they will certainly appear after the delirium of love has passed away; or under the nameless and numberless illusions of that fever of the senses, of vanity, and instinct, too often miscalled by the name of love. I much mistake, if the greater portion of the domestic infelicity, which is loudly charged upon the wedded state in the abstract, is not owing to this fascination, this incapacity to examine the only elements on which the happiness of a family must depend. All I would say, is, before entering on this union, remember, that it is easier to repent before, than after the evil is without a remedy. Pause and scrutinize; and let not the first glimpse of real light open your eyes to your true condition, when it is irretrievable.

I am as well aware, as the author can be, that there are many more happy marriages, than vulgar opinion allows, and that even in those, which are not reputed happy, in which the parties them-

selves have had their criminating and complaining *eclaircissemens*, there is often much more affection than has been allowed to exist. Such is generally found to be the case in the numberless attempted separations, which prove abortive, when the final alternative is to be adopted. I know, too, that the history of the manifestation of conjugal affection is one of the most affecting and honourable to human nature that has ever been exhibited. No union of tenderness and fortitude has ever been displayed in the annals of human nature, that can be compared with the maternal love and conjugal affection of a devoted wife. Of this, if I had space, and my scope were different, I could cite numerous and most impressive examples.

Note 28, page 114.

I beg leave to enter my utter dissent to this doctrine. It seems from a note appended to this chapter of the author, that dislike to female authorship has been carried to the most ridiculous lengths in France. This is the more astonishing, as no country has produced so many admirable female writers, many of them peculiarly noted for possessing the charm of simplicity, and freedom from pedantry and affectation. A woman, not less than a man, is more amiable, interesting, and capable of sustaining any relation with honour and dignity, in proportion as she is more instructed and enlightened. It is to female pedants only, that the ridiculous question of the French academy, whether a reputable woman could write a book, ought to apply. If a woman really deserves a crown of laurels, it sits more gracefully on her brow than any chaplet of roses that poet ever dreamed of. But let us have real, unpresuming knowledge, without pedantry or affectation, either of which is always odious in man or woman, but certainly, as it seems to me, most so in woman.

Note 30, page 119.

Nothing, however, is more common than this contemptible ambition of wives to govern their husbands. It is said than there

are coteries of wives who impart the rules in masonic conclave. Be it so. Whoever exults in having usurped this empire, glories in her shame. If there be any axiom universally applying to this partnership, it is, that the interest and reputation of the concern must be identical. However much a wife may humble her husband, in general estimation, by presenting him in the light of a weak and docile subject, with all sensible persons she humbles herself still more. If the slave is contemptible, the tyrant is still more so. For the rest, this chapter contains more truth and impressive eloquence upon this all important theme than I have elsewhere met in so small a compass.

Note 31, page 121.

I present you with the following development of these new emotions, which, I hope, you will not find amiss. "William and Yensi were as happy in this vale as man can hope to be here below. They would have requested nothing more of heaven, than thousands of years of this half dreaming, yet satisfying existence. A daughter was born to them, a desert flower of exquisite beauty even from its birth. New and unmoved fountains of slumbering and mysterious affections were awakened in the deepest sanctuary of their hearts. In the clear waters of the brook, which chafed over pebbles, turfed with wild sage and numberless desert flowers, under the overhanging pines, in the tops of which the southern breeze played the grand cathedral service of the mountain solitudes, William performed, as priest, father, and Christian, the touching ceremony of baptizing his babe. Adding the name Jessy to that of the mother, it was called Jessy Yensi. The sacred rite was performed on the sabbath, as the sun was sinking in cloud-curtained majesty behind the western mountains. The domestics, Ellswatta and Josepha, looked on with awe. William read the Scriptures, prayed, and sang a hymn; baptized his babe, and handed the nursling of the desert to Yensi. As she received the beloved infant in her arms, after it had been consecrated, as an inmate in the family of the Redeemer, while tears of tenderness and piety filled her eyes and fell from her

cheeks, she declared that she would no longer invoke the universal Tien, that the God of William and her babe should be her God, and that they would both call on the same name when they prayed together for the dear babe even unto death."—*Shoshonee Valley*, vol. i. p. 52, 53.

Of the emotions excited by all the incidents between the cradle and the grave, none can be compared for depth and tenderness to those called forth by the birth and baptism of the first child of an affectionate and happy husband and wife. Those for whom this work is more peculiarly intended, will be aware to what incident in our common stock of remembrances the above extract refers. Delightful sentiments, and yet deeply tinged with sadness! What a mystery is this conjoined miniature image of the parents, the babe itself! What a mystery the world with its mingled lights and shadows, upon which the feeble stranger is entering! What a mystery the unknown bourne to which it is bound! What a mystery the God to whom it is consecrated! Callous and cold must be the heart of parents, that this mutual pledge of love and duty will not unite in one unchangeable sentiment of love and identity of interest until death.

Note 33, page 126.

My views touching the modes in which the best results of education are to be obtained, whether just or erroneous, have at least the advantage of being entirely practical. I am sufficiently convinced, that there must be an adequate and happy organization and mental development, without which no education, however wise and assiduous, will ever effect anything more than mediocrity of character and acquirement. In the present state of public opinion, as great mistakes are made by expecting too much from the training of schools, as were formerly committed by attempting too little. The opulent, and people in the higher walks especially, are tempted by their condition to believe, that wealth and distinction can purchase and even command mind, and that cultivation of it by which more enlarged and distinguished minds differ from the common measure of intellect; a mistake, than

which no other is more universally and palpably taught by every day's experience. The Author of our being reserves, and will never impart his own high prerogative, to bestow mind; and he as often dispenses the noblest and richest endowment of it in the lower as in the upper walks of life; though, as we have seen, he has indicated, in the order of nature, a process of unlimited improvement of organization and endowment.

But the substratum of a practical and well endowed mind, to begin with, being granted, I beg leave to add my conviction to that of M. Droz, a conviction which as I think, will resume its authority and influence when most of the present tedious and endless systems and projects of education will have passed into their merited oblivion. It is, that strong, latent, and distinguished character and acquirement receive in domestic education that predominant and fashioning direction which they retain through life. The peculiar impress of a parent, a family-friend, a single tutor, is often as distinctly marked upon the whole after-life of the scholar, that becomes truly distinguished, as though he had been wax in the hands of a moulder. The numerous tutors of opulent families, and of public institutions, seldom impart the same advantage. Their different views and modes of discipline counter-vail and neutralize each other. The Greeks and the great Romans taught at home, the master being a member and an honoured one of the family. The master and the pupil walked, conversed, and pursued their amusements together; and the sweet associations of home and the shade and freedom from restraint were conjoined with the lessons. When the good Plutarch paints to us, with his inimitable *naïveté*, one of his favourite characters, he indicates as his first felicity, that it was his lot to have the training of an Aristotle, or some similar worthy. Consult the English Plutarch for the same fact. Could all the commencing circumstances of most of the great men who have lived, be exactly traced, we should find the same truth disclosed. That the development of strong inclination for books, studies, and literature depends almost entirely on domestic habits and pursuits, the family, in which *our* common remembrances centre, is a striking example. During the years in which the minds of this family received their un-

changeable impress, the members were almost as vagrant in their modes as the Tartars. All their education, except domestic, was exceedingly imperfect and desultory. Books were often wanting; adequate teachers always. But the love of the parents for books and reading was a simple, natural, unaffected, and intense impulse. They loved the thing for its own sake, and independent of all its results. The first instruments of pleasure, and things of estimated value, that greeted the infant eyes of the children, were books; not furniture, dress, and the imposing ostentation of a modern parlour. Pleasant conversations, disputes, between laughter and seriousness, about these books, were the first conversations that greeted their listening ears. These conversations were perceived to be of deep and heart-felt interest, and as little mixed with pedantry and formality as the manifestations of instinct. The children saw, that to those they most loved, admired, and were disposed to imitate, books were the grand sources of interest, converse, and enjoyment. They as naturally imbibed similar tastes as, to use a coarse illustration, the children of savages learn to love hunting. The first thing for which they contended, and with which they wished to play, was a book, or a picture. Their first lisplings were trials of skill, touching the comparative progress which they had made in their knowledge of the contents of these books, and the application of it to present use. These trials they saw to be the chief points of interest and amusement for their parents. Thus, habits of reading and application *grew with their growth and strengthened with their strength*; and many a criticism, if not erudite and profound, at least eliciting hearty praise and laughter, passed away unrecorded in their domestic privacy. The neighbours admired, and, I fear, envied and calumniated, but could not but take astonished note of such results in a family without wealth, without the common appliances, which themselves could so much better afford, and which they had been accustomed to consider the only price at which intellectual improvement could be purchased. It was placed beyond question, or denial, that the members of that family had right views, quiet and unawed self-respect, and could converse rationally upon every other topic as well as books; that tact and dis-

ermination pervaded their manifestations of thought and pursuit; and that they possessed an inexhaustible source of amusement and satisfaction independent of wealth, fashion, society, distinction, or any external resource whatever—the habit of internal reflection, comparison, and pleasant converse with themselves.

Parents, when you have imparted to your children habits and tastes like these, you have bequeathed them an intellectual fortune, which few changes can take away; and which is as strictly independent as anything earthly can be. You have unlocked to their gratuitous use perennial fountains of innocent and improving enjoyment. You have secured them for ever against the heart-wearing gloom of *ennui*, insufficiency to themselves, and slavish dependance upon others for amusement. Spend as lavishly as you may, in multiplying fashionable instructors, and blazon, as much as you will, the advantages of your children; if they do not perceive, while the rudiments of their taste and habits are forming, that you consider literature, science, and the improvement of intellect a matter of paramount interest and importance, you will never cause their stream to flow higher than your fountain. An occasional parlour lecture, or a high wrought eulogy, will not convince them or avail to your purpose. They must see this preference, as all others, which they will be inclined to copy, manifested in your whole deportment and conversation.

But, while I am convinced, that parents will find efforts to train their children to be highly intellectual, rowing against the current, unless they evince, themselves, by their habitual examples, that they consider it a higher attainment to possess literature and conversational powers, than fashion, or wealth, or the common objects of pursuit; in other words, that all efficient education must be essentially domestic, I would not be understood to undervalue public schools and colleges. I am aware, that in these places are best imparted the knowledge and adroitness that fit them for the keen scramble of ambitious competition. But in regard to those boys who leave their competitions behind the classes of the university, I think, on examination, we shall find that the germ and the stamina of this progress were early communicated by instruction and example at home. At table,

around the evening fire, in the Sabbath walk, in the common family intercourse, in the intervals of the toil of your profession, whatever it be, the taste and the permanent inclination for literature and intellectual cultivation are imparted. This can never be, if, behind all your eulogy of these things, you discover that your ruling passion is money, or the sordid objects of common pursuit.

Note 34, page 128.

It is a common and, I much fear, a well founded complaint, that some latent mischief in our system of education, political institutions, the ordering of our establishments, or in all these together, has generated, as a prevalent moral evil, filial unkindness and ingratitude. Scramble, competition, and rivalry are the first, last, and universally witnessed order of things in our country. Nothing becomes a topic of conversation that is of absorbing interest, but acquisition and distinction. The manifestations of an intellect, sharpened for the pursuit of these things, is the subject of most earnest eulogy. Children, by our usages, are early cast upon their own resources, and taught to shift for themselves. The consequence seems to be, that the parental and filial ties are severed, as soon as the children are able to take care of themselves, almost as recklessly, in regard to subsequent duty, piety, or affection, as those of the lower animals. When we see a spectacle so revolting, and unhappily so common, of sons who, as soon as they have realized *the portion of goods that falleth to them*, or of daughters, as soon as they have secured lovers or husbands, forgetting the authors of their days, it becomes us to search deeply for the defect in our discipline, or institutions, that originates the evil. The callous hearts of such children may no longer be appalled by the terrible execution of the Jewish law against such monsters. They may neither feel, nor care, how *sharper than a serpent's tooth* may be this want of filial piety to their parents. But, by a righteous reaction of the divine justice, more terribly vindictive than the threatened judgment of the Jewish law, thankless children bear in their hearts the certain guaranty of their own self-inflicted punishment. They part for ever with the purest and

noblest sentiments of the human heart; and they procure for themselves the sad certainty of being cast off in their turn, by their children, in the helpless period of their old age.

## Note 35, page 129.

The history of literature proves that none of the more unworthy sentiments of human nature have been so adverse to friendship as the vanity of literary rivals. From many noble examples of a contrary kind which we might cite, I select the intercourse between Racine and Boileau. When Racine was persuaded that his malady would end in death, he charged his eldest son to write to M. de Cavoye, to ask him to solicit the payment of what was due of his pension, that his family might not be left without ready money. He wrote the letter and read it to his father. "Why did you not," said he, "request the payment of the pension of Boileau at the same time? Write again, and let him know that I was his friend in death." This friend came to receive his last adieu. Racine rose in bed as far as his weakness would allow. As he embraced his friend, he said, "I regard it a happiness to die in your presence."

## Note 36, page 131.

The celebrated Voiture, one of the *beaux esprits* of the age of Louis XIII., had lost all his money, and had an immediate call for 200 pistoles. He wrote to the Abbe Costar, his faithful friend. This admirable letter presents us with a trait of that confidence and frankness which sincere friendship inspires. It was this.

"I yesterday lost all my money, and 200 pistoles more, which I have promised to pay to-day. If you have that sum do not fail to send it. If not, borrow it. Obtain it, as you may, you must lend it me. Be careful to allow no one to anticipate you in giving me this pleasure. I should be concerned lest it might affect my love for you. I know you so well, that I am aware you would find it difficult to console yourself. To avoid this misfortune, rather sell what will raise it. You see how imperious my

love for you is. I take a pleasure in conducting in this manner towards you. I feel that I should have a still greater if you would be as frank with me. But you have not my courage in this point. Judge, if I am not perfectly assured in regard to you, since I will give my promise to him who shall bring the money." The Abbe Costar replied—"I feel extreme joy to be in condition to render you the trifling service you ask of me. I had never thought that one could purchase so much pleasure for 200 pistoles. Having experienced it, I give you my word, that, for the rest of my life, I will retain a little capital always ready for your occasions. Order confidently at your pleasure. You cannot take half the satisfaction in commanding that I shall in obeying. But, submissive as you may find me in other respects, I shall be revolted if you wish to compel me to take a promise from you."

Note 37, page 132.

Although I do not intend to cite in this place the story of Damon and Pythias, nor to harp upon discussions of a theme, upon which there has been more odious prosing, and more semblance of sentiment than all others, yet a subject, intrinsically of the first importance, and founded in nature, can never cease to have claims upon attention, in consequence of having been hackneyed to threadbare triteness. There is such an affection as friendship. It belongs to man, and is the highest honour of his nature, less gross and terrene, than the short epilepsy, the transient and fitful fever of the senses, commonly dignified with the name of love, and warmer, more exhilarating, and elevated, than mere esteem, and common liking; it excites, without inflaming; it thrills, without jealousy, corroding fear, or morbid solicitude. It is that sentiment, which a poet would naturally assign to intellectual beings of a higher order, who were never invested with the corporeal elements of mortality.

I wish those most dear to me, implicitly to believe in friendship. I would a thousand times prefer that they should err on the side of credulity than of suspicion and distrust. I deprecate, above all things, that they should give up human nature. I consider

real misanthropy the last misfortune. I would rather my children should meet with treachery and inconstancy every day of their lives, than resign themselves to the morbid and heartless persuasion, weakly considered an attribute of wisdom and greatness, that men are altogether selfish and unworthy of confidence. It is a persuasion that not only for ever invests the universe in an Egyptian gloom "*that may be felt*," but, by an energetic bearing on all the faculties and sources of feeling, causes the heart that entertains such views to become what it believes to be the character of the species.

No scruples of false decorum shall withhold me from saying, that amidst all the selfishness which optics of the most charitable vision could not but discover on every side, I have seen friendship, pure, holy, disinterested, like that of the angels; nay, more—have been myself the subject of it. My heart swells, and will to its latest pulsation, with the remembered proofs. True, the instances, that have fallen within the compass of my experience, are very few; but they are sufficient to settle my conviction, that the sentiment, which has inspired the enthusiasm of eloquence, painting, and song, in all time, is not the illusion of a weak and misguided imagination. Selfish as man is, we often see instances of the most generous and devoted friendship, even in this silver age, the age of revenue and political economy.

With my author I believe, that where the sentiment exists between a man and a woman, admitting each to possess the estimable endowments peculiar to each sex, and so exists as not to be modified by any of those countless associations of another order of sentiment, that almost imperceptibly invest relations between the two sexes, it is more vivid, permanent, and disinterested, more capable of making sacrifices, and more tender and delightful than it can be between persons of the same sex. Of this class are the most noble, touching, and sublime examples of a constancy under every form of proof, that the history of the human heart records.

While every one is sensible that there must exist between characters that are susceptible of all the fidelity and beauty of this sentiment, a certain adaptation of circumstances, and conformity of disposition, mind, development, and temperament, I

believe with St. Pierre, that it is desirable that there should be a certain contrast as well as much fitness. Constant assentation, the same opinions, tastes, tempers, and views have been found by experience not to generate the most permanent and pleasant unions of the sort. The moral as well as the physical appetite would grow weary of perpetual uniformity and unvarying similarity, and requires the spice afforded by the mixture of various ingredients of affectionate contrariety. Both the love and friendship most likely to endure, spring up between the placid and piquant, the tranquil and energetic, the monotonously sweet tempered and the sensitive, whose irritability is held in check by good sense, kindness, and self-control;—between the temperament connected with blue eyes and fair hair, and that of the keen deep black eye and raven locks. “*Soldiers*,” says St. Pierre, “on long and distant expeditions, should be associated with ministers, lawyers with naturalists, and, in general, the strongest contrasts of profession”—*all nature’s discord thus making all nature’s peace*. But I am perfectly aware that there will be great danger of making fatal mistakes in acting on this principle. I am confident that is true in the abstract; but let sentimentalists beware of trenching too confidently on ground, where the limits between safety and ruin are so narrow and difficult to discern. Doves of a different feather may pair happily, but not doves and vultures. There must be a certain compatibility not only of character, but of age, condition, and circumstances, as we are broadly instructed in the fable of the frog thinking to wed with the ox.

Any discussion of the details, touching the requisite circumstances of compatibility to form friendships with any chance of their being pleasant and permanent, as well as the obligations and duties involved by it, would require a volume, and would carry me utterly beyond my present purpose. Books are ample, if not interesting and just, in the information which they impart upon this subject. With my views of its obligations and duties in few words, I shall dismiss it.

In a pecuniary point of view the claims of friendship are only limited by the sterner demands of justice. The common adage,

which calls upon us to be just before we allow ourselves to be generous, is worthy to be written in letters of gold; though it has been a thousand times wrested by selfish and cold hearts into a pretext for their avarice. Whoever should think of lavishing his money upon a friend, in order to absolve himself from the more difficult calls of justice, would show a mind too weak and incapable of discrimination to honour that friend by his bounty. But, grant that the friends have delicacy, consideration, and gentlemanly tact, and they may possess a common purse without danger to the duties of either.

The fame and character of the one are strictly the property of the other. Let no one, who has the least particle of the base alloy of envy in his feelings towards him, whom he calls his friend, who is willing to hear and countenance abatements of his qualities, talents, or virtues, dare to assume that almost sacred name. He is equally unworthy of it if he stand by in neutrality when calumny is busily passing against him; and still more, if by smiles he gives his countenance and half his consent to the story of detraction and abatement. It is a forfeiture of the right to the name, though it may be a less worthy one, to make the person called friend, the subject of jest and ridicule. In regard to all these points, the duties are clear, distinct, palpable, and not to be compromised. Every honourable mind feels, in witnessing any infraction of the laws of equity or strict justice, a sentiment of recoil and disgust, difficult perhaps to define, but one which instantly designates the person guilty of it, as unworthy of the name of friend. Honest, frank, and disinterested advice, especially in relation to concerns of great interest to the party, is a paramount obligation, whether the advised will bear or forbear. This prerogative may, indeed, be claimed by unfeeling and rude bluntness. But, by a discriminating mind, the suggestions of a counterfeit, will never be mistaken for those of genuine friendship.

The time, the courtesy, and the amount of intercourse, due from one friend to another, can never be brought under subjection to rules. Moral, like physical attraction, acting unconsciously, will regulate this portion of duty, with the unvarying certainty of the laws of nature. If persons, claiming to sustain

this relation to each other, do not wish to be as much together, as duty and propriety will admit; if they allow this matter to be settled by the rigid tithing of etiquette, they are anything rather than real friends.

I have been struck by an incident in the life of a religious woman, I think it was Mrs. Graham. There was a sacramental pledge between her and a friend, that, whichever of them should be first called from life, the other should visit her in the sickness, which she should consider her last, and not leave her until she had received her last sigh. Sublime test of affection! what a tender, sacred office, after a life of friendship, thus, by a sacramental contract, to close the eyes of the friend beloved in life, and separated only by death! There can be no doubt that the feelings called thus into action, are peculiarly fitted to mitigate the last sorrows; and in the simple grandeur of such a sentiment, so manifested, the departing friend will see a proof that such affections are, in their own nature, immortal; and that such ties shall be renewed in the eternal regions of the living.

When friends are separated wide from each other by distance, duty, and the stern calls of our pursuits, I admire the custom of baptizing, if I may so say, our remembrances, by giving the names of our dear and distant friends to the hills, valleys, streams, trees, or pleasant views in our walks; or the objects most familiar and pleasant to our view. The stern silence of nature may thus be compelled to find a tongue, and discourse with us of those we love.

In a word, the name, I am sensible, is too often a morbid mockery of cold and affected sentimentalism, both weak and disgusting, the cant term for the intercourse between the enlarged prisoners of boarding schools. But the sentiment exists pure, simple, delightful. Neither fawning, nor cant, nor flattery, nor any mixture of earth's mould makes any part of it. Honourable, dignified, unshaken, it feels its obligations, and discharges them. The reputation, character, and whole interest of the friend is its object; and his highest happiness its prayer. In holy segregation from the hollow intercourse, false phrases, and deceitful compliments of fashion, and what is called the world, it is faithful and

consistent, under all proofs and trials, until death ; and when the eyes of the departed are closed, his memory is enshrined in the remembrance of the survivor. Thank God ! I have seen, I have felt, that there are such friendships ; and if there is anything honourable, dignified, and attractive in aught that earth presents, it is the sight of two friends, whose attachment dates from their first remembered sentiment, and has survived difference of opinion and interest, the changes of distance, time and disease, and those weaning influences, which, while they crumble the most durable monuments, convert most hearts to stone.

Note 38, page 134.

I have long been in the habit of measuring the character, mental power, and prospects of the young, who are brought by circumstances under my observation, by the power which they evince to resist the suggestion of the senses. In the same proportion as I see them capable of rising above the thraldom of their appetites, capable of that energy of will that gives the intellectual controul over the animal nature, I graduate them higher in the scale of moral power and prospect. But if, in their course, they manifest the clear preponderance of the animal ; if sloth, sensuality, and the inclinations, which have no higher origin than the senses, sway them beyond the influence of advice and moral suasion, be they ever so beautiful, endowed, rich, distinguished, be their place in general estimation ever so high, I put them down as belonging to the animal, and not the intellectual orders. They can never reach higher worth and success than that which is the blind award of accident.

Note 39, page 136.

It seems to me, that writers on taste have not seen all the importance of uniting physical with moral ideas, to give them any deep and permanent interest. This subject might be enlarged to any extent, by carrying out the details, suggested by the striking, just, but necessarily very brief views of the author. We have

here a clue, by which we may explore a whole universe of the highest and purest pleasures which can touch the heart, and which to the greater portion of the species have no existence.

There are travellers more learned, and equally capable of noting facts with M. de Chateaubriand. They have traversed the same countries, seen the same objects, and collected an immense mass of facts, which they have published, on their return, to be read by none but kindred spirits as dull as themselves. In his record of his travels in the same countries, we are beguiled onward under the spell of a sustained charm. The imagination is constantly in action; the heart swells; images of grandeur and beauty, remembrances of pathos and power are evoked from every side, and the shadows of the past throng round us. Why is it so? The former see brute nature, in its lifeless and motionless materiality, divorced from mind and memory. The latter not only sees that universe with a radiant eye, but holds converse with a superincumbent universe, as much more vast, beautiful, touching, diversified, than the other, as mind is superior to matter. It is this creation of thoughts, remembrances, poetry, and affecting images, in his mind, intimately connected with the other, and overshadowing it, like an illumined stratum over a region covered with palpable mist, by virtue of which he makes nature eloquent. This is the charm spread over all the beautiful passages that abound in his writings; a peculiar aptitude to associate nature in every position and form, with the universe of thought within him. Such is the endowment of all poets, orators, and painters, that have produced efforts worthy of immortality. Common writers see nature dead, silent, sterile—mere brute and voiceless matter. Endowed minds kindle it into speech, beauty, and grandeur; interpreting it by the internal world in their own minds.

Note 39, page 138.

These illustrations of the importance of uniting moral with physical ideas, in regard to vision, landscape, painting, and music, are as true as they are eloquent and striking. Who has not had the vivid remembrance of home recalled in a distant land by a

tree, a feature in the landscape, a blue hill in the distance ! How readily the shadowy images of memory are evoked ! Every one is acquainted with the touching circumstance in the character of the Swiss soldiers serving in foreign countries. Great numbers of them used to serve as stipendaries in the French armies. It was forbidden to play, in their presence, the air *Ranz des vaches*. Home, sickness, and desertion, scarcely failed to ensue from hearing it. The wild and plaintive air reminded them of "Sweet home," their mountains, their simple pleasures, and the range and lowing of their kine. The beautiful Scotch airs derive their charm from their association with mountain scenery, and the peculiar history and manners of a highly sensitive, intelligent, and national people. The same may be said of the unrivalled *Erin go Bragh*, in relation to the Irish; in a word, of the national music of every people. Associate any idea with sentiment and the heart, and it becomes touching and sublime, and capable of stirring the deepest fountains of feeling, according to the remembrance with which it is allied.

Note 40, page 141.

I have heard persons endowed with keen feelings, repiningly contrast the miseries which they endured from an excess of irritable and unregulated sensibility, with the apparently joyous apathy of fat and fortunate burghers, who seem to find no sorrows and no troubles in life, and who hear with incredulity, and, in fact, with an entire want of comprehension, about sufferings resulting from witnessing misery which we have no means of relieving, and the sorrows, from innumerable sources, to which those of a keenly sensitive nature are subject. I have never seen these contrasts of character in this light. I unhesitatingly believe that a righteous Providence has exactly and admirably adjusted the weights in either scale. The great mass, who are not disturbed with excess of feeling, are, from the same temperament, interdicted from a whole universe of enjoyments into which those who possess sensibility, and regulate it aright, have free access.

## Note 41, page 142.

Man seems to contain, according as he is contemplated in different lights, inexplicable contradictions of character; and to be at one time all tenderness of heart; and at another an odious compound of insensibility and cruelty; according to the circumstances with which he is surrounded, and the positions in which he is placed. Who could believe, that it was the same being that now dissolves into tears at the rehearsal of a tragedy, on reading a romance, or witnessing a spectacle of misery, and now hurries from these emotions to see a bull-fight; and, in passing to the show, encourages two bullies in the street to form a ring to bruise each other! Who would believe, that it has always been considered an attribute in the more susceptible sex, to regard duellists with a partial eye; to give a secret place in their kind feelings to those who are reckless of their own and another's blood; and, more than all, to look propitiously on soldiers encrusted with the fresh stains of the battle field? Nay, more, who reads without astonishment, and almost without unbelief, that a whole people, in the days of the pagan Roman emperors, days of the utmost luxury of taste and refinement, days in which, in all probability, traits of kindness, generosity, and magnanimity were no more uncommon than now, the ladies of the greatest and most splendid city in the world thronged with an irrepressible curiosity, and an intense desire to see naked gladiators lacerate and stab each other, and old and feeble men torn in pieces by lions and wild beasts, when merely a movement of a finger would save them!

The ministers of the gospel, who attribute the abhorrence, which the same spectacles would excite in the population of a Christian city, to the humanizing influences of our faith, forget that such a city has seen, times without number, its inhabitants pouring forth from its gates, to witness miserable victims burnt to death at an *auto da fe*, and shouting with joy at the spectacle.

Protestant ministers exult in contrasting the influences of the reformed faith with results like these; and yet witness their congregations thronging in crowds to see a wretched criminal swing-

ing in the agonies of strangulation. The same people thrill with horror as they hear around their evening fire how those whom they call savages dance and yell round the stake at which a captive enemy is burning. To the red man it seems the extreme of cold-blooded ferocity to execute a criminal with a halter by the hands of a person who bears no ill will to the victim.

Far be it from me to question one of the sublime trophies of the gospel, or to doubt its refining and humanizing influences. But the whole aspect of history and society compels me to believe that fashion and prevalent opinions exert an influence that will bring men to tolerate almost anything. I much fear that the spectacles of the Roman Amphitheatre might be revived, if a certain number of any community would pertinaciously conspire to write in favour of them, and countenance them by their presence.

Note 42, page 142.

To present, in contrast, the favourable side of human contradictions:—I have seen a man plunge into the water, and put his own life at fearful jeopardy, to rescue a stranger from drowning. I have witnessed instances of disinterested and heroic sacrifice, which present men in the aspect of angels, in every walk of life. Such sublime samples of the capability of our nature are the appropriate theme of oratory, painting, and song; and cannot be too much blazoned. Pity it is that history did not select more instances, and dwell upon them with more partial eulogy, instead of amplifying the revolting details of war.

Two instances of affecting manifestation of tenderness are deeply impressed upon my memory, simply because they were elicited by common cases of suffering, and had in them nothing of romance, or of uncommon tendency to excite the feelings.

I was passing in the streets of one of our northern cities. On the marble door-steps of a sumptuous mansion sat a ragged boy, with a look at once dogged and subdued, manifesting long acquaintance with sorrow and want. Near him sat an aged woman, apparently his mother, decrepit, worn, and squalid, with her face

turned from me. The boy was devouring with voracious greediness a piece of dried herring. Fair and richly dressed children were passing to their morning school. Most of them jeered him in passing, calling him to get down from the steps, and asking him if he was very hungry. "Yes, and you would be hungry, and sad too, if you was poor and a stranger, and had to take care of an old mother, and had walked as far as I have." One of the boys lingered behind, as if ashamed of his feelings. I noticed his broad high forehead, and eye speaking a soul within. His eyes filled with tears as he handed the boy money. My own eyes moistened as I witnessed the angelic expression of this noble boy, who, I dare affirm, had not the spirit to do such things by halves.

The other was in another extremity of our country, where money and cotton, sugar and slaves, balls and theatres, are the all-absorbing objects of interest. A large group of gaily dressed gentlemen and ladies were promenading, in company with an heiress and her intended husband, who were shortly to be married, and they were merely discussing the preparations. A poor, pale boy, apparently a stranger, came up to them, with his written petition for charity; and with the low and subdued tone of voice appropriate to shame, bashfulness, and misery, began to tell his little story. The splendid laughers walked on with an incurious carelessness. One of the group lingered behind. He was struggling with the difficulties of obtaining a profession, and aiding in the support of a distant family. But he bestowed on the boy one of his few remaining dollars. When I see such instances of native tenderness of heart, I thank God that men are not totally depraved.

Note 43, page 143.

Every one who has had extensive acquaintances, and been exposed to frequent requests for letters of recommendation, and to procure the intervention and aid of opulent friends, must feel the importance and justice of these remarks. We ought not to refuse such letters from indolence, selfishness, or the commonly alleged fear of troubling our friends. But then the case must be such as

will bear us out, in being measured and scrupulous, in regard to the existence, the actual truth, and justice of what we advance; otherwise our interposition will soon be rendered cheap and inefficient; and will react, in creating want of respect for the writer, instead of good feeling toward the person recommended. Such, in a great measure, is the result in the current value of these letters, as they are emitted according to the common forms of society.

Note 44, page 143.

A most affecting proof that the human heart is not intrinsically bad, and that the obduracy and cold-blooded selfishness of the world is adventitious, and the result of our modes and our training, is, that the sisters of charity, the truly beneficent everywhere, create a deep sensation of respect in beholders. Efficient charity is almost the only thing that no one feels disposed to question or slander. A corpse was borne slowly by me to the place of its long sleep. An immense procession followed, with sorrow and respect impressed upon their countenances. I asked whom they were burying. "A single woman, without wealth or connexions—but her life has been marked by beneficence." If that sex which so instinctively desire to appear to advantage, knew in what light a lady distinguished by fortune and cultivation appears, while traversing the dirty and dark lanes of a city, to seek out and relieve cases of misery, they would practise charity, were it from no higher motive than to create a sensation and appear lovely. Every one knows the example of the sublime quoted by Longinus from Moses. A passage in the gospel seems to me still more sublime: *He went about doing good.* All other homage than that which the heart pays to beneficence is adventitious. This is real.

Note 45, page 146.

Of all the pleasures of our earthly sojourn, after those of a good conscience, the most varied and yet equable, healthful, and permanent, are those of reading. "I have never," says a respectable

writer, "passed a comfortable day without books since I was capable of reading." It is certainly pleasant to be able to converse with the wise and instructed of all countries and all times, without formality, without embarrassment, and just as long as we choose; and then dismiss one of them, without any apology, and sit down with another. We travel without expense with them. We inhabit the tropics, or the polar circle, the table summits of mountains, or the wide plains, at our choice. We journey by land or by sea. We select congenial minds, and make them converse with us about our congenial pursuits. We throw away no voice; we never dialogue in wrath; and intelligence converses with intelligence, divested of terrene grossness and passion. When detained on long journeys, in some remote interior tavern, by a storm or inability to find a conveyance, how keenly, while reading almanacks of the past years, and old fragments of books, found on the dusty shelf of the ordinary, have I felt the value of books as a perfect cure for the impatience of such a position. In this state of privation and intellectual fasting, we master dull and tiresome books, which, under other circumstances, we should not have dreamed of reading. Then the mind is taught to pay the proper homage to these intellectual resources.

The pleasures of winter reading, in the sacred privacy of the parlour, are thus finely described by Thomson, the painter of nature:

"There studious let me sit,  
And hold high converse with the mighty dead ;  
Sages of ancient time, as gods revered,  
As gods beneficent, who bless'd mankind  
With arts, with arms, and humanized a world.  
Roused at th' inspiring thought, I throw aside  
The long-lived volume ; and, deep-musing, hail  
The sacred shades, that slowly-rising pass  
Before my wondering eyes. First Socrates,  
Who, firmly good in a corrupted state,  
Against the rage of tyrants single stood,  
Invincible ! calm Reason's holy law,  
That voice of God within th' attentive mind,  
Obeying, fearless, or in life or death :

Great moral teacher ! Wisest of mankind !  
Solon the next, who built is commonweal  
On equity's wide base ; by tender laws  
A lively people curbing, yet undamped  
Preserving still that quick peculiar fire,  
Whence in the laurel'd field of finer arts,  
And of bold freedom, they unequalled shone,  
The pride of smiling Greece and human kind.  
Lycurgus then, who bow'd beneath the force  
Of strictest discipline, severely wise,  
All human passions. Following him, I see,  
As at Thermopylæ he glorious fell,  
The firm devoted chief\*, who proved by deeds  
The hardest lesson which the other taught.  
Then Aristides lifts his honest front ;  
Spotless of heart, to whom th' unflattering voice  
Of freedom gave the noblest name of Just ;  
In pure majestic poverty rever'd ;  
Who, e'en his glory to his country's weal  
Submitting, swell'd a haughty rival's† fame.  
Rear'd by his care, of softer ray appears  
Cimon sweet-soul'd ; whose genius, rising strong,  
Shook off the load of young debauch ; abroad  
The scourge of Persian pride, at home the friend  
Of every worth and every splendid art ;  
Modest and simple, in the pomp of wealth.  
Then the last worthies of declining Greece,  
Late call'd to glory, in unequal times  
Pensive appear. The fair Corinthian boast,  
Timoleon, happy temper ! mild and firm,  
Who wept the brother while the tyrant bled.  
And, equal to the best, the Theban Pair‡,  
Whose virtues, in heroic concord join'd,  
Their country raised to freedom, empire, fame.  
He too, with whom Athenian honour sunk,  
And left a mass of sordid lees behind,  
Phocion the Good ; in public life severe,

\* Leonidas. † Themistocles. ‡ Pelopidas and Epaminondas.

To virtue still inexorably firm ;  
 But when, beneath his low illustrious roof,  
 Sweet peace and happy wisdom smooth'd his brow,  
 Not friendship softer was, nor love more kind.  
 And he, the last of old Lycurgus' sons,  
 The generous victim to that vain attempt,  
 To save a rotten state, Agis, who saw  
 E'en Sparta's self to servile avarice sunk.  
 The two Achaian heroes close the train :  
 Aratus, who a while relumed the soul  
 Of fondly lingering liberty in Greece ;  
 And he, her darling as her latest hope,  
 The gallant Philopæmen ; who to arms  
 Turn'd the luxurious pomp he could not cure ;  
 Or toiling on his farm, a simple swain ;  
 Or, bold and skilful, thundering in the field.

" Of rougher front, a mighty people comes !  
 A race of heroes ! in those virtuous times  
 Which knew no stain, save that with partial flame  
 Their dearest country they too fondly loved :  
 Her better Founder first, the light of Rome,  
 Numa, who soften'd her rapacious sons ;  
 Servius the king, who laid the solid base  
 On which o'er earth the vast republic spread.  
 Then the great consuls venerable rise.  
 The public Father \* who the private quell'd,  
 As on the dead tribunal sternly sat.  
 He whom his thankless country could not lose,  
 Camillus, only vengeful to her foes.  
 Fabricius, scorner of all-conquering gold ;  
 And Cincinnatus, awful from the plough.  
 Thy willing victim †, Carthage bursting loose,  
 From all that pleading Nature could oppose,  
 From a whole city's tears by rigid faith.  
 Imperious call'd, and honour's dire command.  
 Scipio, the gentle chief, humanely brave,  
 Who soon the race of spotless glory ran,

\* Marcus Junius Brutus. † Regulus.

And, warm in youth, to the poetic shade  
With Friendship and Philosophy retired.  
Tully, whose powerful eloquence a while  
Restrain'd the rapid fate of rushing Rome.  
Unconquer'd Cato, virtuous in extreme ;  
And thou, unhappy Brutus, kind of heart,  
Whose steady arm, by awful virtue urged,  
Lifted the Roman steel against thy friend.  
Thousands besides the tribute of a verse  
Demand ; but who can count the stars of heaven ?  
Who sing their influence on this lower world ?

“ Behold, who yonder comes ! in sober state,  
Fair, mild, and strong, as is a vernal sun ;  
‘ Tis Phœbus’ self, or else the Mantuan swain !  
Great Homer too appears, of daring wing,  
Parent of song ! and, equal by his side,  
The British Muse : join’d hand in hand they walk,  
Darkling, full up the middle steep to fame,  
Nor absent are those shades, whose skilful touch  
Pathetic drew th’ impulsion’d heart, and charm’d  
Transported Athene with the moral scene ;  
Nor those who, tuneful, waked th’ enchanted lyre.

“ First of your kind ! society divine !  
Still visit thus my nights, for you reserved,  
And mount my soaring soul to thoughts like yours.  
Silence, thou lonely power ! the door be thine ;  
See on the hallow’d hour that none intrude,  
Save a few chosen friends, who sometimes deign  
To bless my humble roof, with sense refined,  
Learning digested well, exalted faith,  
Unstudied wit, and humour ever gay.  
Or from the Muses’ hill will Pope descend,  
To raise the sacred hour, to bid it smile,  
And with the social spirit warm the heart ?  
For though not sweeter his own Homer sings,  
Yet is his life the more endearing song.”

## Note 46, page 147.

Whoever has attempted to concentrate his thoughts in fixed contemplation upon the origin of the human race, the object of our present existence, and our prospects beyond it; upon the character and plan of the divinity, and the mode of his being, must have felt a painful vagueness, a dizzying sense of the weakness of our powers, very naturally preparing us for superstitious and terrific views of the first cause. But when, in the clear light of reason, I look upon his creation, on his star-spangled firmament, and the glory of his works, I should as soon doubt my own existence, as the perfect wisdom and goodness of the author of my being. All religion which does not strengthen our confidence in this must be a dreary illusion. Horrible dreams, dating their origin from the associations of childhood, and the rant of wild and visionary ministers, may sometimes interpose, in the uncertain moments between sleeping and waking, as among the gloomy presentiments and partial delirium of ill health. But every rational mind must finally settle to repose in that glorious persuasion, which instantly irradiates the moral universe with perennial sunshine. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice." In this or any other world, in our present or any other forms of conscious being, we may advance upon the unexplored scenes with a full confidence that we can never travel beyond the beneficence and equity of the infinite mind.

One of the standing themes of Christian pulpits is the puerile and absurd views which the common creed of the Greeks and Romans presented of the rabble divinities of their Pantheon; deities, who fought, intrigued, made love, and intoxicated themselves; deities, who had great power in a valley, and none on the adjoining hills; deities, who were conquered and transferred with their territory, and became, in consequence, subservient to their conquerors. I have heard discussions of this kind in the discourse of the sabbath morning: and, in that of the evening, views of Christian theology, scarcely less narrow and unworthy of the Supreme Being. I am compelled to believe from reading and observation, that the mass of the people in all churches, have had

no other conception of the divinity than that of a being moulded much like themselves. We cannot avoid discovering, that their ideas of a God are gross, material, local, partial; that they behold him as the God of their place, party, and passions. Converse with the fiercer sects, and you perceive that their views immediately become vague as soon as they contemplate the Almighty occupied with concerns beyond their sect. It seems beyond their thoughts to realize that their denomination bears to the species little more than the proportion of a drop to the ocean: and that the Supreme Being cannot be rationally supposed more concerned about them, than any other equal number of his children.

Nothing can be more philosophical or consoling than the Scripture views of what has been called a *particular providence*. But, as we hear it generally expounded from the press, the pulpit, and in common conversation, it offers views of the Divine Being and government, scarcely less weak, monstrous, and unworthy, than those entertained by the ancient Pagans. What a conception, to suppose that a perfect law, as wise and equitable in its general operation as infinite wisdom and goodness could ordain could be continually infringed to meet countless millions of opposing prayers and interests! What a view of God, to imagine, that earnest and concurrent prayers can at any time divert him from his purpose and change his plans! What palpable misinterpretation of the Scriptures, to suppose that they give any countenance to such debasing conceptions of God! Hear rigid sectarians converse, and you discover that they think little of the divine providence which has no reference to their individual interests and concerns. From the tone of their conversation, it is but too manifest, that they have an interior confidence that they can obtain of the divine power almost what they will.

The testimony of church history, and the experience of time, testify that the million under all degrees of light, shrink from the difficult and philosophical idea of the real Jehovah of the Bible; and form, instead, the easy and natural image of a limited, partial, changeable God, whom importunity can easily induce to swerve from his purpose; and who is, in many respects, such a being as

themselves. It is the embodied conception of their own narrow views, assigned to a local habitation. To him the countless millions of other lands, and other forms of worship, are not like them, as children. Unable to rise to the Supreme Being, they have brought Him down to them.

A few minds, from age to age, elevated by endowment and circumstances far above their contemporaries, have not only embraced, in common with others, the easy and simple sentiments of Him which the heart entertains, but have raised their contemplations so high, as to behold him in the light of truth—have seen Him, in some sense, *as he is*—have been filled with awe and confidence, in the view of his immutability, and with filial and cheerful resignation, in seeing in the universe, its order, mutations, and variety, in the mixed condition of man, in a word, in every feature of the natural and moral creation, as in a mirror, a perfect transcript of the divine perfections—a pattern of an archetype without a shade of defect. Instead of bringing the Divine Being down to them, they have raised themselves up to him. The veil, that screens his glory from the feeble vision of the multitude, has been removed. Being assured, that he has made of one blood all nations that dwell on the earth, they have seen it to be impossible that he should look upon one portion of his children with more favour than on another. They have seen, in the superior light and advantages of one part of the species over another, not the indication of what is technically called *special favour*, but the natural result of the operation of his universal laws. They have seen, that if the inhabitants of one region are enabled to rise higher in the intellectual scale, and pay him a more spiritual and worthy homage—the simple inhabitants of *distant barbarous isles* have an organization admitting them to be as happy as their natures will admit, and as full of enjoyment as their measure can contain. If they are unable to offer an intellectual worship, the service of their minds, their hearts are formed for fervent admiration and worship of the thunderer—the Being who raises fruits and flowers, and hangs out his bow on their clouds. They see, in all this, that *God also hath set one thing over against another.*

## Note 47, page 149.

The wisdom of allowing any place to the imagination among the faculties to be nurtured, I have often heard called in question. The extremes of opinion frequently meet in the same point. The most earnest declaimers against the indulgence of the imagination are commonly found among the class of strict religionists. It is, at the same time, a strong and prominent trait in the system of Mr. Owen "the philosopher of circumstances," and his followers, that we ought to eradicate this faculty, if possible, or at least suppress its exercise; and reduce all mental operations to the cultivation of the reasoning powers. For me, I hold, that we are as much indebted to the author of our being for granting us this faculty as any other. I see nothing wrong, or unphilosophical in cultivating it to the utmost extent; provided our imaginings would be innocent if we could render them realities; unless it can be shown that the indulgence of this faculty enervates the mind and unsuits it for encountering the stern duties and trials of life. So far from believing this to be the natural tendency of its allowed exercise, my experience has led me to suppose, that persons strongly endowed with this faculty, are most likely to show energy for the discharge of common duties; and constancy and cheerfulness in encountering trials. Are the southern people of Europe, for example, less firm in conflicting with danger and sorrow, or more feeble and remiss in the discharge of duties, than the northern nations, admitted to be far less imaginative? Within the range of my experience I find those possessed of the most vivid imagination the most prompt to duty, and the most cheerful in sorrow. The moody advocates of pure and exclusive reason lay feeling, one of the strongest impulses to duty, out of the question; and would extinguish one of the surest supports in sorrow, the power of creating a bright internal world for ourselves, when the external world is involved in unavoidable gloom.

They who decry the indulgence of the imagination, must of course, object to the endowment of poets and painters; and equally to the pleasure derived from reading poetry and con-

templating paintings. The whole empire of these kindred studies is that of the imagination. Let us try the alleged puerility of indulging this faculty. No one will deny that it is the highest wisdom to seek to be as happy as we innocently may. When a mental faculty is employed in creating within us a celestial world, peopled with nobler beings, acting from higher motives, and showing a happier existence; and in substituting the beautiful possible for the tame real; if we find innocent happiness in this celestial castle-building, are we not employing reason, only in a different direction from the common? When any one can prove to me, that it is puerile to make ourselves happy, and from sources always within our own controul, then I will admit, that ideal pleasures are unworthy of a reasonable being. Prove only, that the indulgence of the faculty enervates the mind, and indisposes it for duty and constancy in suffering, and I will grant at once, that it should be stifled, or its action restricted or suppressed. So far from believing this to be the fact, I would counsel him, whom I most love, to seek in her whom he would select for his wife, a cheerful and active imagination. It is an egregious mistake, that mathematicians and practical men have generally been found destitute of a good development of this faculty. Contrary to the vulgar and hackneyed theme of pulpit declamation, I have found, on examination, that some of the most energetically charitable women I have ever known, were veteran novel readers; as have also been some of the most profound lawyers that have ever adorned the judgment-seat in our country.

## Note 49, page 150.

It is not exactly true, that this faculty can be subjected to the complete controul of the will. I know of no point in metaphysics connected, also, with an important question in rhetoric, upon which less light has been thrown than the question, how far, and in what way the imagination can be cultivated; and by what methods brought under the controul of the will. A system of useful and practical rules for this result, *ie*, as far as my reading extends, a desideratum. Dr. Johnson, it is well known, believed,

that a man's muse was *sua dextra*, his own will, industry, and habits, and that by a vigorous effort over himself, he could write, for example, at any time. This may be true in efforts in which imagination is not required; but, where the vivid exercise of this faculty is requisite to excellence, it is not true. Let the most amply endowed poet suffer under mental depression, dyspepsia, a concurrence of small misfortunes and pretty vexations. Let him write in a smoky apartment, and look abroad upon a leaden sky, marked with the dulness of winter, without its storms and congenial horrors. He may repair to his rules. He may apply the whip and spur, and invoke the nimble fancies from the vasty deep, and the muses from their hill, but they will not answer nor come at his bidding.

The imagination may be cultivated to a certain extent; and brought by rules and intense concentration of mind, in a certain degree, under the controul of the will. Those who would nurture it, ought intensely to study those rules. But, after all, to be able to exercise it in high measures of vivacity, is an endowment, in the bestowment of which nature has been more capricious than in almost any other. Even when possessed in copious measures, its province lies so intermediate between corporeal and mental influence, between the prevalent temperament of the period of its action, and the concurrence of external circumstances beyond our controul, that we can easily see, why the wise ancients, who thought more justly upon these subjects, and more profoundly than the moderns seem to be willing to apprehend, attributed the successful efforts of the muses to a superior and celestial influence. He, who pushes the theory of our controul over this faculty beyond truth, adopts an error, nearly if not quite as dangerous as he who holds that we have no controul over it at all.

A thousand external circumstances, which it would require a volume to enumerate, must concur with a certain easy and strong excitability in the physical and mental frame; and that excitability called into action by the right sort of stimulants, to impart happy and vigorous action to the imagination. Milton affirmed that his muse was most propitious in the spring. As far as I can judge,

the season of reproduction, and the awakening of the slumbering powers of nature, in the aroma and brilliancy of vegetation and flowers, acts too voluptuously on the senses to give the highest and best direction to the imagination. The Indian summer days of autumn, with the associated repose of nature, the broad and crimson disk of the sun enthroned in the dome of a misty sky, the clouds sleeping in the firmament, the gorgeous colouring of the forests, the flashing fall of the first leaves, and the not unpleasing sadness of the images called up by the imperceptible decay of nature, and the stealthy approach of winter, seem to me most favourable to heavenly musing. A cloudless morning, a beautiful sun, the glittering brightness of the dew drops, the renovated freshness of nature, morning sounds, the mists rolling away from the path of the sun, a bland south west breeze, good health, self-satisfaction, the recent reception of good news, and the right train of circumstances, all concur to put this faculty into its happiest action.

Every one is acquainted with the unsparing ridicule bestowed on Bayes in Buckingham's Rehearsal, for announcing that he always took physic before he wrote. Yet the dull coxcomb had reason and truth on his side. Mental action is more dependant upon corporeal, and the ethereal powers upon the right disposition of that organized clod, the body, than most are willing to acknowledge. Who has not felt, when first going abroad from severe sickness, the new aspects of nature, a fulness of heart, and the crowding of innumerable images upon the thoughts, which have no place in the mind, after a turtle feast or a full dinner? When the digestive powers are oppressed with morbid accumulation, the wheels of mental movement, as every one knows, move heavily. Students, orators, painters, poets, imaginative men, must live as near famine as may be, and the most useful stimulants are coffee and tea. Every one has read that Byron's inspiration was gin. It may be, that the detestable combination of terebinthine and alcoholic excitement may have aroused from the mouldy and terrene dormitories of his brain the images of *Don Juan*, and the obscene, irreligious, antisocial, and fierce thoughts, that abound in his works. But I would hardly believe, on his

own assertion, that he wrote the Prisoners of Chillon under such an influence. The muse of alcohol is accursed; and her influence is too corroding, dreggy, and adverse to life, to originate ideas worthy of being handed down in immortal verse. If these baleful aids were resorted to at all, I should consider opium a thousand times preferable to alcohol.

I know, from my own experience, that this reality of actual and present existence may be imparted to the creations of the imagination, by long habits of subjecting it to the controul of the will. The enjoyment, resulting from reality, may be more intense, but it is, also, more tumultuous and feverish. I know of no happiness, more pure, prolonged, and tranquil, more like what we may imagine to be the bliss of higher intelligences, than to be able to create this sunshine of the soul, this fair and celestial world within ourselves, and make ourselves free denizens of the country. From these fairy mansions labour, care, and want are excluded. The obstacles and impediments of time, distance, and disease, both of body and mind are excluded. The inhabitants, walking in the light of truth and the radiance of immortal beauty, from sin and death for ever free, unite the wisdom of angels to the simplicity and affectionate confidence of children.

Note 50, page 151.

No people, in my estimation, are farther from true wisdom, than they who denounce these pleasures of the imagination as the puerile follies of weak minds. They who are most prompt to bring the charge are generally destitute of the faculty and its kindred endowments themselves, and seem to desire that other minds should be reduced to their own scale of sterility. Puerile, to avail ourselves of the power of rendering ourselves innocently happy! To me the puerility belongs to those who mostly abstain from contemplating the few gleams of sunshsine, that we can behold between the cradle and the grave. "But these joys are unreal!" What is there in the *vain show* of life that is not so? See the greedy scramble of ambition after honour, wealth, and distinction, the painted baubles of insects, who hold all by the

frail tenure of life! Life itself, what is it, but a dream, sometimes illumined by the rainbows of imagination and hope?

Note 51, page 154.

A being endowed with such intense emotions as man, and so placed as to have them; so strongly called forth by the relations he contracts; so much in the dark in regard to his origin, his end, and everything about him; conscious that he must shortly leave home, all that he loves, the view of the earth and the sky, and that body, which long habit has taught him to consider as himself, to moulder back to the soil, should naturally be expected to have this tendency to melancholy. Beautifully said the fabulist, "that he who formed us, moistened the clay of our structure not with water but tears." The natural expression of the human countenance in sleep is shaded with a slight veil of melancholy. It has been observed, that the national music of all people, and, more especially, of the uncivilized tribes, is on a key of melancholy. Most of the voices of the animal tribes are of this cast. The strain of the nightingale is the deepest expression of this sentiment. Religion should be the grand re-agent in bringing light and cheerfulness to a universe of sadness and death, by presenting new views of that universe, its author, his beneficence, and the ultimate hope of the soul.

' See truth, love, and mercy in triumph descending,  
And nature all glowing in Eden's first bloom;  
On the cold cheek of death smiles and roses are blending,  
And beauty immortal awakes from the tomb.'

Note 52, page 155.

With the honourable exception of some towns and districts in our country, the epitaphs and monumental inscriptions are utterly beneath criticism. The greater portion are from Watts, and the other minor poets, too often little more than extravagant, coarse, miserable conceits. Here and there, a beautiful quotation from the Bible, such as "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord;"

"Man cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down," only serve to render the worthlessness of the remainder more conspicuous by contrast. What adds to the unpleasant effect, is, that no inconsiderable portion of them are absolutely misspelt, to say nothing of the punctuation. Strange, that survivors should incur the expense of a slab, and permit a stone-cutter to select, spell, and point the inscriptions. It is to be hoped that some competent writer will, ere long, take in hand this matter, so vital to the literary reputation of our country, and introduce a thorough and general reform, by wiping away this national stain, and introducing that beautiful and sublime simplicity which ought always to characterize monumental inscriptions.

Akin to the bad taste of this sort, is the slovenly manner in which our church-yards are kept, in whole sections of the country. Who has not felt pain at seeing many and even most of these places sacred to memory, in the western county especially, uninclosed, trampled upon by cattle, and the narrow heap of turf disturbed by swine?

Of writers, whose works have been immortalized by the muse of melancholy, I am acquainted, in the French language, with Chateaubriand, who has produced occasional passages of this class not to be surpassed; and Lamartine, whose poetry breathes a rich and deep strain of melancholy. Young's *Night Thoughts*, Blair's "Grave," and Porteus "on Death," are celebrated English specimens of this class of poetry. In our country the *Thanatopsis* of Bryant ranks quite as high as either of the former writers in this walk. Some of the lines are of exquisite beauty, as paintings of the trophies of the tomb. Another age will do justice to many of the thoughts in the *Sorotaphion* of a young poet, who has written on the remote shores of Red River.

The first lines of the inscription on the famous Roman statue of Sleep are the sublimest concentration of melancholy thought:

"It is better to sleep than wake; and best of all to be in marble."

The same may be said of that of the orphan nun, who died in the prime of youth and beauty: "I was alone among the living. I am alone here."

But it is in the book of Job, that poetic images, upon which has been thrown the shade of a sublime melancholy, are set forth with a power and pathos that leave little more to succeeding writers in that walk than to study, combine, and reproduce their features. How perfectly has this author given utterance to the groans of one in utter despondency and bereavement! Here the heart speaks its own language with a simplicity and truth to make its way to every other heart. These features fix the date of this poem at a period antecedent to the settled art of writing, and plagiarizing the shadow of a shade more conclusively than volumes of criticism. He copied not, but drank at the fountain; feeling deeply and expressing what he felt.

Note 53, page 155.

When in my travels I pass through a town or village, which I have not seen, if I have sufficient leisure, the first place which I visit, is uniformly the church-yard. The feeling that I am a stranger, that I know not the scenery, and that it knows not me, naturally induces a sort of pensive meditation which disposes me for that sojourn. I form certain estimates of the taste and moral feeling of the people from the forms and devices of the slabs and monuments, and the order in which the consecrated ground is inclosed and kept. The inscriptions are ordinarily in too bad a taste to claim much interest, though there are few church-yards that cannot show some monuments which, by their eccentric variation from the rest, mark character. All this is a matter of trifling interest compared with the throng of remembrances and anticipations that naturally crowd upon the spirit of a stranger in such a place. Youth with its rainbows and its loves; mature age with its ambitious projects; old age in the midst of children, death in the natal spot, or the house of the stranger; eternity with its dim and illimitable mysteriousness; these shadowy images with their associated thoughts pass through the mind and return like the guests at an inn. While I look up towards the rolling clouds, and the sun walking his unvarying path along the firmament, how natural the reflection, that they will present the same

aspect, and suggest the same reflections, that the trees will stand forth in their foliage, and the hills in their verdure, to him who comes after me, when I shall have taken my place with the unconscious sleepers about me! I never fail to recollect the charming reflections in a number of the Spectator, that treats upon a visit to Westminster Abbey, the most impressive writing of the kind, as it seems to me, in our language.

Here is the place to reflect upon the folly, if not the guilt, of human hatred and revenge, ambition and avarice, and the million puerile projects and cares that are incessantly over-clouding the sunshine of existence. What an eloquent lesson do these voiceless preachers read upon the wisdom of most of those thoughts and solicitudes that disturb our course through life!

The heart cannot but be made better by occasional communion with these tenants of the narrow house, where—

“ Each waits the other's license to disturb  
The deep, unbroken silence.”

Note 53, page 155.

It is questionable how far they could lay claim to be the real friends of humanity, who would reason away this last best solace\* of human wretchedness even were it proved an illusion. But man is just as certainly and necessarily a religious being as he is a being constituted with appetites and passions. Grant that there are people who seem wholly destitute of the religious sentiment. Such are the real Atheists from internal conviction; for, observe, there are many who assume to be such to pass for free and independent thinkers, and who are most likely in their dying moments to require absolution and extreme unction. But if there are men thus monstrously constituted, so are there individuals apparently as destitute of the common appetites and passions. We take no account of such exceptions in indicating a general rule; and say, that man is constituted a religious being, and possessed of certain appetites and passions, although there may be selected a few individuals who seem entirely without either.

Religion is the key-stone of the arch of the moral universe. It

is the fountain of endearing friendship; and on it are founded those sublime relations, which exist between the visible and the invisible world; those who still sojourn here, and those who have become citizens of the country beyond us. It is the poesy of existence, the basis of all high thought and virtuous feeling; of charities and morals; and the very tie of social existence. Let no person claim to be good while laying an unhallowed hand upon this ark of the covenant of the Eternal with the children of sorrow and death.

Note 54, page 160.

Treatises upon the evidences of religion may be useful for theological students; and I have heard people affirm, that they have been rescued by such works from the gloom of unbelief. But, believing as I do, that we were constituted religious animals, if such a term may be admitted, and that the religious sentiment is a part of our organization, I have quite as much confidence in the arguments of the heart, as of the head. I undertake not to pronounce whether M. de Chateaubriand were a good christian or not: but I affirm, that I have nowhere seen my own views of the process, by which the original endowment of the religious sentiment is called into action, so eloquently described as in the following extract from that writer.

“ My mother after being thrown, at the age of seventy-two years, into a dungeon, where she saw a part of her children perish, expired at last upon a couch of straw, to which her miseries had consigned her. The remembrance of my errors infused great bitterness into her last days. In death she charged one of my sisters to recall me to that religion in which I had been reared. My sister transmitted me the last wish of my mother. When this letter reached me beyond the seas, my sister herself was no more. She had died from the consequences of her imprisonment. These two voices, proceeding from the tomb; this death, which served as the interpreter of the dead, deeply struck me. I did not yield, I admit, to great supernatural lights. My conviction proceeded from the heart. I wept, and I believed.”

Note 55, page 163.

The belief naturally originated by the sentiment of religion, or what may be called the faith of the heart, is presented in the last fruitless attempt of the old man to cheer the despair of Paul in the exquisite tale of Paul and Virginia. "And why deplore the fate of Virginia? Virginia still exists. There is, be assured, a region in which virtue receives its reward. Virginia now is happy. Oh! if from the abode of angels, she could tell you, as she did, when she bade you farewell, 'O Paul, life is but a trial. I was faithful to the laws of nature, love, and virtue. Heaven found I had fulfilled my duties, and snatched me for ever from all the miseries I might have endured myself; and all I might have felt for the miseries of others. I am placed above the reach of all human evils, and you pity me! I am become pure and unchangeable as a particle of light, and you would recall me to the darkness of human life. O Paul! O my beloved friend! Recollect those days of happiness, when in the morning we felt the delightful sensations excited by the unfolding beauties of nature; when we gazed upon the sun gilding the peaks of those rocks; and then spreading his rays over the bosom of the forests. How exquisite were our emotions while we enjoyed the glowing colours of the opening day, the odours of our shrubs, the concerts of our birds! Now at the source of beauty, from which flows all that is delightful on earth, my soul intuitively sees, tastes, hears, touches, what before she could only be made sensible of through the medium of our weak organs. Oh! what language can describe those shores of eternal bliss which I inhabit for ever! All that infinite power and celestial bounty can confer, that harmony which results from friendship with numberless beings, exulting in the same felicity, we enjoy in unmixed perfection. Support, then, the trial which is allotted you, that you may heighten the happiness of your Virginia, by love which will know no termination by hymeneals which will be immortal. There I will calm your regrets; I will wipe away your tears. Raise your thoughts towards infinite duration and bear the evils of a moment.'"

## Note 56, page 166.

Phrenologists affirm, that along the centre of the crown is situated the organ of veneration or religious sentiment; that, where it is large, the subject is strongly endowed with religious feeling, and the contrary when it is otherwise; that with some few monstrous exceptions, all possess this organ in a larger or smaller degree; and that as the sentiment springing from the action of this organ is directed towards proper or improper objects, enlightened by reason, rendered gloomy by fear, or superstitious by credulity, is the religious character of the person. Neither my subject nor my inclination calls upon me to agitate a system which has generally been met only with unsparing ridicule, instead of manly argument. With its doctrines or merits I intermeddle not in this place. But as far the system declares, that those people, whom we call pious, whose tone of mind seems to dispose them to strong religious feeling, are so inclined from organization, rather than volition or argument, I most confidently believe. Morals, whatever is taught by the science of ethics, dogmas, ceremonies, commonly phrased religion, make, in my mind, no part of it. I consider religion to be simply love, originating from instinctive impulses of veneration in the mind, for whatever is powerful, beneficent, and worthy of love. Its native tendency is to expend its affection, first upon the unknown and incomprehensible power from whom we derived our being, whom the heart without argument intuitively perceives to be good. Its next and associated tendency is philanthropy, or the love of what bears the impress and image of God. If we possess not this original organization, no argument will ever persuade us to be religious. If we have it, we may be liberal, or bigoted, Christians or Mahometans, earnest or cold, according to our proportion of endowment, our training and circumstances. We may even adopt the flippant arguments of the unbelieving, and enlist ourselves under their banner. But the original principle is still within us, uneradicated and uneradicable; and ready, if circumstances should favour the change, to present us in the form of devotees, or, as the phrase is, *converted*. The whole wisdom and

excellence of religious training consists in enlightening this noble sentiment, and giving it a right direction. I am the rather confirmed in these views, by having remarked that the chief palpable and tangible influences of religion, which I have witnessed in all the sects that I have had occasion to observe, have seemed to me to result from the affectionate spirit of their worship, creating in them strong dispositions to love one another.

Open the gospels and the epistles, and what is the first impression from perusing these unique and original writings, so wholly unlike any other recorded compositions, and bearing upon a theme of such astonishing import? The simplicity and fervour with which the spirit of love is impressed upon the pages. The strong and before unwitnessed manifestation of this spirit was the striking aspect which the first Christians presented to Pagan beholders. "See!" said they, "how these Christians love one another." Every time I peruse the writings of the New Testament, this peculiar badge of discipleship seems more visibly impressed upon them. In what other institution but that of Christianity was it ever practicable to possess all things in common? Where has been the community in which no one felt want when a disciple had wherewith to satisfy it? In what other chronicles do we meet with such affecting and sublime examples of devotion to each other, and a constancy of affection, which showed itself proof against all other human passions, selfishness, hope, fear, earthly love, and the terror of death? What tenderness and singleness of heart in their affection for each other! How beautifully they demonstrate that the sentiment which actuated them had gained a complete triumph over all considerations arising from objects below the sun? He on whose bosom the loved disciple leaned must certainly be admitted to know the peculiar and distinguishing feature of his religion. This feature stands forth embodied in all his teachings. Philanthropy is the predominant trait in the life of Him *who went about doing good*. Consider the basis of religion to be a sentiment implanted in our constitution, and this result would naturally be expected to flow from its development.

True religion, consisting in an enlightened and affectionate

direction of the heart towards the divinity, and manifesting itself in love to the human family, and in consequent obedience to the universal and unchangeable laws of the Creator, can only be expected to result from the highest discipline of the mind, and the ultimate exercise of the purest reason. But the sentiment from which this religion springs in some form or other, as naturally impels the heart towards God, and its faith and aspirations towards immortality, as fishes desire to find their home in the water, or birds in the air; and as everything that has life obeys the peculiar instincts and impulses impressed by the divine hand. Why else should every people under heaven, in all time, have been found with a religion in some form, and hopes and fears beyond the grave? Consider religion in this light, and its hopes are as sure as those objects towards which the instincts of all other animals prompt them.

Do I undervalue morals, since I do not deem them a part of what should be properly called religion? I trust I cannot be so mistaken. Ethics may be taught as a science, and, however important, seems to me no more a part of religion than mathematics or natural philosophy. Love will create morals; and its perfection the perfection of morals, that we ascribe to angels. All that has been urged from the pulpit, in regard to faith and works, as cause and effect, may, with still more justice be applied to love and duty. Love is the faith of the heart, and its original impress, when rightly trained in the science of ethics, and enlightened by pure and simple reason, produces its results in the best exemplification of the christian character.

Note 57, page 171.

That person has no right to complain of the shortness of life who lies in bed, either sleeping or dozing, until nine; and thus voluntarily consigns to unconsciousness a twelfth part of his existence. As little reason has he for indulging a querulous spirit on this score, if he spends without object a considerable portion of his time with people about whom he knows nothing, except that they are incapable of furnishing a moment's pleasure or instruc-

tion to any one. If each one noted down at night the incidents of the day that had occupied his time, and how much of it he had appropriated to each, I fear all that portion that we call people of leisure would be able to show but a lean schedule either of utility or enjoyment as the result.

Complaints of the brevity of life are equally interdicted to all those who do not wisely improve every hour of the brief and uncertain present. He, who regretted his stinted fortune, would find and deserve little sympathy, if, in the very moments of complaining, he was seen inconsiderately squandering from that limited fund. To form a resolution to mark every moment of life that we might, with a succession of pleasant ideas, would probably triple the duration of most human lives. To sleep no more than nature requires, to rise early, to discipline ourselves to preserve an elastic and active spirit and a vigorous will, are parts of this resolution. It is a much greater part than is commonly apprehended, to waste as little time as possible on those who are incapable of understanding us, and whom we are as little capable of understanding. Reciprocal good feeling is much more likely to be created and sustained by those who are determined to avoid this course, than those, who, from mere unmeaning civility and common etiquette, bring their incompatibilities together, to make common stock of a mutual weariness with each other, which soon ripens into concealed, if not expressed ill feeling.

They who are accustomed to think in this direction, will easily fill out the fine outline of the author's views touching the right mode to arrest the flight of time. To add to this sketch would require an extent of detail, for which I have here no place. The general principle of this process seems to consist in meeting pain and adversity with a spirit so philosophic and firm that they will recoil from it; and to dwell upon every innocent enjoyment, as though it were our first, and would be our last; to prolong it by investing it with all possible moral relations; and to discipline the mind never to become hackneyed, sated, wearied, and callous to the sense of objects in which man is bound to feel an interest, alike by his duty and his nature.

Never was a more stupid maxim than that common one, that

*nil admirari* is the proper motto of a philosopher. To preserve a freshness, a juvenile sensibility of the heart for the admiration of whatever is new, beautiful, and striking, for all the pleasures of taste and the understanding, seems to me the true secret of the highest wisdom. Who can fail to be inspired with disgust at witnessing the common spectacle of *cognoscenti*, men of *virtu*, travelled fools, who have been everywhere and seen everything; and by the contemptuous sneer with which they affect to see, hear, feel, and speak of all that passes under their present observation, instruct you that they are too wise, and of a taste too refined, to be pleased with what satisfies untravelled people. For my part, when I hear them boast of the music, paintings, and architecture of continental Europe and England, as though all the sources of beauty were there, I can only say, that nature is always at hand to mock at all the puny efforts of art; that she delights to mould living faces and forms in remote country cottages that no *beau ideal* can reach; that the songs of the birds, that return from other climes to their forsaken groves with the first sunny days of spring, constitute a music richer to the heart than the most fashionable opera; and that a pure spring landscape is a picture a thousand times more splendid than any that ever adorned the walls of the Louvre. He who preserves to his utmost age his youthful sensibility of heart, and who is willing to be pleased with whatever will impart innocent pleasure, will find innumerable and never-failing occasions to give his heart up to the full impulses of joy.

“I pity,” says Sterne, “the man who can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and cry ‘tis all barren; and yet so it is; and so is all the world to him who will not cultivate the fruits it offers. I declare, said I, clapping my hands cheerly together, that were I in a desert, I would find in it the wherewith to call forth my affections. If I could not do better, I would fasten them on some sweet myrtle, or seek some melancholy cypress, to connect myself to. I would court its shade and greet it kindly for its protection; I would cut my name upon it, and swear it was the loveliest tree in the desert. If its leaves withered, I would teach myself to mourn; and when they rejoiced, I would rejoice with them.”

Note 58, page 172.

I consider it no unimportant part of the process of prolonging our earthly sojourn, to lay in, if I may so speak, as great a stock as possible of pleasant remembrances. I appeal to the experience of every one, if the sudden recollection of a foolish thing that we have said or done, returning upon us after a lapse of years, has not brought back with the convulsive shudder of shame, a long train of associated remembrances, which have carried us back whole days upon the scene? How long seem the periods in which these incidents occurred! Pleasant recollections are no less efficient in prolonging the periods in which they occurred, adding their duration to the sum of the fugitive existence that is stealing from us.

For myself I can confidently affirm, that I have long since learned to find my purest and most abiding satisfactions in the memory of the past. I repeat all its happier passages and incidents. I recall the bright days, verdant landscapes, loved persons, and joyous sensations from their shadowy mansions. I renew my youthful sports; and watch for the trout along the flush spring brooks. I seat myself again on the sunny banks of the pleasant spots of my career. I would be glad to convey some idea of the vivid pleasure I experience, after a lapse of forty winters, from the deeply impressed remembrance of one beautiful spring morning, after a long and severe winter, when I was still a school-boy. The vast masses of snow were beginning to melt. The birds of prey, shut up in their retreats during the bitter winter, sailed forth in the mild clear blue. The blue bird whistled; and my heart expanded with joy and delight unknown, in the same degree, before or since. The place where these thoughts comprising my youthful anticipations, hopes, and visions occurred, will never be obliterated from my mind while memory holds her seat. I have a thousand such treasured recollections, with which I can at any time, and to a certain extent, cheer pain, sorrow, and decay. These are enjoyments stored beyond the reach of fortune, which we can prolong and renew at pleasure.

Is there not practical wisdom in commencing every day with

he steady effort to make as much of it as if it were to be our whole existence. If we have duties to perform, in themselves severe and laborious, we may inquire if there be not some way by which to invest them with pleasant associations? A man may find amusement in his free thoughts, while following his plough upon the hill side; in digging up the words for a dictionary, or in copying out a brief. He may train himself, by an inefficient and shrinking spirit, to recoil from these tasks as insupportable burdens. How many men find their pleasure in what would be the positive horror and torment of the indolent! How weak the spirit and how silly the vanity which we display in ever renewing narrations of our little personal troubles, pains, and misfortunes! If we would have the discretion to measure the sympathy which we may expect from others in such discourses, by that, which we are conscious of feeling for theirs of the same character, it would go far to teach us the folly of that querulous spirit which doles forth the story of sufferings and sorrows, as though the narrator were the only sufferer, and were entitled to a monopoly of all the passing pity.

## Note 59, page 175.

This compendium of the moral acquirements, entering into the character of an accomplished philosopher, I consider one of the happiest which any book of morals can show. Here is an ample volume of ethics on a page. How differently would a modern auto-biographer have announced the same facts! In what rounded periods and circuitous expressions would he have striven to convey the same ideas to impress the reader that his modesty forbade the frank personality of the Roman philosopher. The whole spirit of this admirable summary would have evaporated in barren generalities. What we admire in the ancients is their noble simplicity and directness, which despairs the vanity of circumlocution, that wishes to hide itself under the semblance of modesty.

It seems to me, that it would not be amiss for the clergy of the day to seek the models of their homilies and sermons in such a

manner of declaring moral truth. Abstract ethical declamation, and all the scholastic acquirements and the *limæ labor* are but poor substitutes for that searching directness, which, avoiding abstractions and generalities, appeals at once to the personal consciousness. I allow that I should love to hear such sermons as that of Dr. Primrose to his fellow-prisoners in the Vicar of Wake-field. There is no eloquence, there can be none, except in simple and direct appeals to thought and conscience.

Note 60, page 177.

Various writers of splendid genius have tasked their imagination to present us with the results of endowing a person with immortality on earth. Such a character has been delineated with great power by Godwin, in his *St. Leon*; and by Croly in the story of *Salathiel, or the Wandering Jew*. It is an instructive labour to record the wanderings, changes, weariness, abandonment, and final despair of a wretch cursed with immortality; and by the circumstance rendered a monster out of relation with human beings; and cut off from all real sympathy with his mortal kind. It is questionable whether these writers, or any others who have drawn similar pictures, have formed adequate conceptions of what would be the actual result of an earthly immortality. The view of the author before me seems just. I can easily imagine the immortal delivered from earthly sorrows. But when I contemplate him divested of the hopes, fears, affections, and sympathies, which trace their origin to our common mortal nature, I cannot imagine the affections that are to replace these.

I can conceive none other than a being who would become drowsy at sixty, and sleepy at a hundred. All beyond presents to me a lethargy of almost unconscious existence, from which my fancy can devise no effort of sufficient energy to arouse him. In fact, it is sufficient that nature has awarded, in her universal decree, that man should not be out of analogy and relation with the rest of nature, to convince us that the decision involves our best interest. The more our views of nature enlarge, the more we become conscious that she has arranged all her laws with such

perfect wisdom, that if we could reverse any of them, we should do it at the expense of our own happiness.

Of all pictures of men rendered immortal upon earth, the most forcible, brief, and revolting, is that of Swift. "After this preface, he gave me a particular account of the Struldbrugs among them. He said, they commonly acted like mortals, till about thirty years old; after which they grew melancholy and dejected, increasing in both till they came to fourscore. This he learned from their own confession; for, otherwise, there not being more than two or three of that species born in an age, they were too few to form a general observation by. When they come to fourscore years, which is reckoned the extremity of living in this country, they had not only all the follies and infirmities of other men, but many more, which arose from the dreadful prospect of never dying. They were not only opinionative, covetous, peevish, morose, vain, talkative, but incapable of friendship, and dead to all natural affection, which never descended below their grandchildren. Envy and their impotent desires are their prevailing passions. But those objects against which their envy seems particularly directed, are the vices of the younger sort, and the death of the old. By reflecting on the former, they find themselves cut off from all possibility of pleasure; and, whenever they see a funeral, they lament and repine that others have gone to a harbour of rest at which they can never hope to arrive. They have no remembrance of anything but what they learned and observed in their youth and middle age, and even that is very imperfect; and for the truth or particulars of any fact, it is safer to depend on common tradition than their best recollection. The least miserable among them are those who turn to dotage, and entirely lose their memories. These meet with more pity and assistance, because they want many bad qualities which abound in others.

"If a Struldbrug happen to marry one of his kind, the marriage is dissolved of course, by the courtesy of the kingdom, as soon as the younger of the two comes to be fourscore; for the law thinks it a reasonable indulgence that those who are condemned without any fault of their own, to a perpetual continuance

in the world, should not have their misery doubled by the load of a wife. As soon as they have completed the term of eighty years they are considered dead in law. At ninety they lose their teeth and hair, and have no distinction of taste, but eat and drink whatever they can get, without relish or appetite. The diseases they were subject to, still continue without increasing or diminishing. In talking, they forget the common appellations of things, and the names of persons, even of those who are their nearest friends and relations. For the same reason they can never amuse themselves with reading, because their memory will not serve to carry them from the beginning of a sentence to the end; and by this defect they are deprived of the only entertainment whereof they might be capable.

"They were the most mortifying sight I ever beheld, and the women more horrible than the men. Besides the usual deformities in extreme old age, they acquired an additional ghastliness, in proportion to their number of years, which is not to be described; and among half a dozen I soon distinguished who was the oldest, although there was not above a century or two between them.

"The reader will easily believe from what I have heard and seen, that my keen appetite for perpetuity and life was much abated. I grew heartily ashamed of the pleasing visions I had formed, and thought no tyrant could invent a death into which I would not run with pleasure from such a life. The king heard all that had passed between me and my friends upon this occasion, and rallied me very pleasantly, wishing I could send a couple of Struldbugs to my own country to arm our people against the fear of death."

Note 61, page 177.

Fear, absolutely useless, gratuitous fear, probably constitutes much the largest proportion of the whole mass of human misery; and of this proportion the fear of death is the principal part. There are but very few people who, in examining the feeling of revulsion and horror most constantly present to their minds,

will not find it to be the dread of death. The whole observation, which I have made upon human nature, has only enlightened me the more as to the universality and extent of the influence of this evil. I see it infusing bitterness into the bosoms of the young, before they are as yet capable of reflection; and ceasing not to inspire its terrors into the heart, which has experienced the sorrows of fourscore winters. I see little difference in the alarm with which it darkens the mind of the heir, elate with youthful hope, and the galley slave—those apparently the most happy, and the tenants of penitentiaries and lazars-houses. All cling alike convulsively to life, and shudder at the thought of death.

Part, and perhaps the greater part, of this fear is a sad heritage, which has been transmitted down to us, an accumulating fund of sorrow for a hundred generations. I have stated my conviction in another place, that our education, religious ceremonies, domestic manners, in short, all the influences of the present institutions of society tend to increase this evil. I am well aware, at the same time, that the number of those who will admit it to be an evil is but small. Most view it as it has been considered in all christian countries, from time immemorial, as an instrument in the hand of God and his servants to awe and restrain the mind, recall it from illusions and vanities, and reduce it to the seriousness and obedience of religion. The broad declamation of the pulpit for effect, revolting representations of hell-torment and the vindictive justice of God, have passed with a readier tolerance, under a kind of tacit allowance, that if the means were unworthy, the proposed end was such as would sanctify them. It is almost unnecessary to remark, that all my hope of producing any useful impression is with the small, but growing number (in the next age, I trust it will be a majority) who hold this whole doctrine in utter unbelief; who have no faith in amendment and conversion that grows out of the base and servile principle of fear; and, least of all, the fear of death; who believe that a great reform, a thorough amelioration of our species, will never be effected until it is made a radical principle of our whole discipline, and all our social institutions, to bring this servile passion completely under the controul of our

reason. With these, it is a deep and fixed conviction, that every thing base, degrading, and destructive of intellect and improvement, readily associates with fear; and that the basis of true religion, generous conception, high thoughts and really noble character, is firmly laid in a young mind, when trained to become as destitute of fear, as if it were conscious of being a sinless angel above the reach of pain or death.

It would be to no purpose for me to pause in this place, to obviate the strictures of those who will denounce this doctrine, by quoting from the scriptures the frequent inculcations of the *fear of the Lord*, and the Apostle's declaration, that by the *terrors of the Lord we persuade men*. The true and religious fear, inculcated in the scriptures, not only has no relation to the passion I am discussing, but cannot exist any more than the other requisite traits of religious character in a bosom swayed by the grovelling and selfish passion of servile fear.

That nature has implanted in our bosoms an instinctive dread of death, I readily admit. But fear, as a factitious and unnatural addition to the true instincts of human nature, has been so accumulated by rolling down through a hundred generations, that we are in no condition to know the degree in which nature intended we should possess it. We have innumerable base propensities, which we charge upon nature, that are, in fact, no more than the guilty heritage bequeathed us by our ancestors. Nature could have implanted no higher degree of instinctive dread of death, than just what was requisite to preserve the race from prodigal waste, or rash exposure of a gift, which, once lost, is irretrievable. If nature has inwrought in any constitution one particle of fear beyond what was required for this result, she has, as in all other excessive endowments, granted reason and judgment to regulate and reduce it to its due subordination.

Will not religion achieve the great triumph of casting out the base principle of fear? I would be the last to deny or undervalue the trophies of true religion. I have no doubt that religion has, in innumerable instances, extracted the pain and poison from the sting of death. More than this, it would unquestionably produce this triumph in every case, if every individual were completely

under the influence of the true principle. It would attain this end by processes and discipline exactly concurrent, if not similar, with those I am about to propose. But it is a lamentable fact, that very few are under the influence of true religion. Of those whom charity deems most sincerely pious, under all professions and forms, the far greater number exhibit on the bed of dangerous sickness the same fear of death with the rest. We consider this a generally conceded fact; for, among all but the most extravagant sects, death-bed terror or triumph, has ceased to be considered a test of the personal religion of the deceased. Even in the cases of enthusiastic triumph in the last moments, which we have all witnessed, and which are justly so soothing to the survivors, it would often be difficult to determine the respective influence of laudanum and partial insanity doing its last work upon the nervous system.

Be this as it may, the triumph over the fear of death, which I would inculcate, should not be tested by the equivocal deportment of the patient in the near view of death; but by his own joyous consciousness of deliverance from this tormenting thralldom and bondage during his whole life. Let fear and horror crowd what bitterness they may into the last few hours, it can bear but little proportion to the long agony of a whole life, passed in *bondage through fear of death*. To produce the desired triumph, the highest training of philosophy should concur with the paternal spirit and the immortal hopes of the gospel; and a calm, reasoning, unboasting fearlessness of death should enable us to taste all the little of pure and innocent joy that may be found between the cradle and the grave—as unmolested, as unsprinkled with this fear, as if the destroyer were not among the works of God.

How may this result be obtained? How may a generation be so trained as to lose not a particle of enjoyment, nor be influenced to one unworthy act by the fear of death? To answer these questions in the requisite detail of illustration would require volumes. It might, perhaps, best be done by selecting a single child as an example; and by developing at every advancing step the process of his training; pointing out every instance in which it would be necessary to withdraw him from the influence of the

present systems of discipline, in which, in a word, his whole education should be conducted with a preponderant purpose, among other desirable results to render him perfectly fearless of death. It is hoped that some one of those who believe this a chief desideratum in the reformation and improvement of the present system of education, will take this great point in hand; and in this way indicate to the age the modes of discipline through which this result may be expected. It is obvious that a much severer discipline would be required for the first generation so trained, than for the second; who, with less transmitted cowardice than their parents, would perpetuate a constantly improving moral constitution to the generations to come. My present plan admits only a brief summary of motives and arguments commonly adduced as calculated to diminish, regulate, and subdue the fear of death. It is evident, that these motives and arguments are predicated upon present opinions, and such as may be supposed capable of acting upon the existing generation, enduring the hereditary and inculcated bondage of this passion.

1. The terrific and undefinable images of horror that imagination affixes to the term *death*, are founded in an entire misconception. The word is the sign of no positive idea whatever. It conjures up a shadowy horror to the mind, finely delineated, as a poetic personage, by Milton; and implies some agony that is supposed to lie between the limits of existence and non-existence, or existence in another form. This is simple illusion. So long as we feel death is not—and when we cease to feel, or commence feeling in a changed form, death has been:—*fuit mors*. So that the term imports a mere phantom of the imagination. In the words of Droz, “It is not yet; or it is past.” If one can arrest the *punctum stans*, and the actual sensation, where waking consciousness terminates and sleep commences, he can tell us what death is. Every one is conscious of having passed through this change; but no one can give any account what were his sensations in the dividing moment of interval between wakefulness and sleep.

2. Imagination is allowed to settle all the circumstances, and form all the associations belonging to the supposed agony of this event. It is one of the few important incidents in life, upon which

reason is never allowed to fix a calm and severe scrutiny. It has been seen in a light too sacred and terrible to permit such a lustration. "It is dreadful," says common apprehension, "for it is the breaking up the long and tender partnership, and producing a separation between the body and the soul—dreadful, because it is the wages of sin, and is appointed to be a perpetual memorial of the righteous displeasure of God in view of sin;" "dreadful," say others, who most unphilosophically believe that man was not originally intended to be mortal, "because a violence upon nature; dreadful, because a departure of the spirit from the regions of the living and the light of the sun, into an unknown and eternal condition. Suns will revolve, moons wax and wane, years, revolutions, ages, counted by all the particles of mist in the sea will elapse, but the place whence the spirit is gone, will never know it more." "It is terrible," says common apprehension, "for it is often preceded and accompanied by spasm and convulsive struggle." The psalmody which we sing in church speaks of the *ghastly paleness*, the *chill sweat*, and the *mortal coldness*, circumstances all, which, seen in other associations, would assume no aspect of peculiar terror.

Then, too, the attendants in the sick room, with a look of horror, inspect the extremities of the patient, and petrify bystanders with the terrible words, "He is struck with death," as though the grisly phantom king of the poet's song had invisibly glided in, and, with his icy sceptre, given his victim the blow of mortal destiny. Who knows not that, though there are usually mortal symptoms which enable an experienced eye to foresee approaching dissolution, the term *death-struck* imports nothing but the weakest vulgar prejudice, a prejudice under the influence of which millions have been suffered to expire, that might have been roused! Innumerable persons, pronounced to be in that situation, have actually recovered; and no moment in the ordinary forms of disease, can with any certainty be pronounced beyond hope and the chances of aid, but that which succeeds the last sigh. Thus every thought of the living, and every aspect of the dying, by a wayward ingenuity, heightens the imagined horror of the event.

Then there are conversations, and hymns, and funeral odes, and

Night Thoughts, which speak of the coldness, silence, and eternal desolation of the grave; as though the unconscious sleeper felt the chill of the superincumbent clay, the darkness of his narrow house, or this terrible isolation from the living. The pale and peaceful course is contemplated with a look of horror. Two of stout heart and tried friendship abide near the kneaded clod until the living are relieved from their ghostly terrors by its deposition out of their sight in the narrow house. The family, the children, the friends alike showing the creeping horror, glide quick and silently on tiptoe through the apartment where the sleeper lies. The first nightfall after the decease is one of peculiar and unmitigated horror. The family, however disinclined to union before, this evening unite with that impress on their countenances which words reach not. Now return to their thoughts the nursery tales, the thrilling narratives of haunted houses and wandering ghosts; and if the minister comes among them, it is probably to evoke before their imaginations condemned spirits doomed to eternal sufferings, quenchless flames, groans without respite, and all the ineffable and eternal torments that the clerical vocabulary of centuries has accumulated.

Need we wonder that in a christian country and among families of the best training, such impressions have become so universal, that they who would be reputed brave blazon their courage by affirming their readiness to sleep in a cemetery, or the funeral vault of a church! It requires no extraordinary effort, and nothing more than the simple triumph of reason among the faculties to enable any man to sleep alone in a charnel house with as little dread as in the apartment of an inn, so that the places were alike in comfort and salubrity. It does not require us to be wise or courageous, but simply not cowards and fools, to feel as little horror in the view of courses, as statues of plaster or marble. One of the most terrible ideas of death, after all, is, that we shall thus, immediately upon our decease, inflict this shrinking revulsion of terror upon all who look at our remains.

The view which reason takes of the sick and dying bed, is, that in the far greater number of mortal cases, the transition from life to death is as imperceptible as the progress of the sun and the

seasons. One faculty dies after another. The victim has received the three warnings unconsciously. Ordinarily, a person may be said to have paid a third part of his tribute of mortality at forty-five; half at fifty-five; and the whole at threescore and ten.

When acute and severe sickness assail the patient, he has passed through what may be called the agony of death at a very early period of his disease. His chief suffering is past as soon as the irritability and the vigorous powers of life have been broken down. When the disorder assumes the typhoid and insensible form, the dull sleep that precedes the final rest of the tomb is already creeping upon him; and severe suffering is precluded. If there are convulsions after this, as often happens, they are seldom more than spasmodic movements, impressed by the nervous action upon the tendons, more terrible to the beholder than the sufferer; differing little from those starts and struggles with which many persons in high health commence sleeping and waking. He who has experienced the sensation of fainting, and, still more, of an epileptic fit, has suffered, I am ready to believe, all that there is in dying.

3. Reason, calmly surveying the case of the dying person himself, sees many alleviations of which imagination, sketching under the influence of the dread of death, takes no account. He finds himself in this new predicament the absorbing object of all interests and all solicitude and affection. It is not in human nature, that this should not call up complacent emotions and slumbering affections from their secret cells. The subsequent progress towards the last moment brings an imperceptibly increasing insensibility, manifested by drowsiness and sleep. Of those who preserve the exercise of their faculties entire to the last, many instances are recorded of persons who had shown the most unmanly dread of death in their health, that have met dissolution with the calmness of perfect self-possession. Of the rest, the greater number die with little more apparent pain and struggle than accompany the act of sleeping. The greater freshness, vigour, and nervous irritability of young people and children cause that most of the exceptions are of this description. In a great number of cases which I have witnessed, I have paused in doubt whether

the person had yielded his last sigh or not after he had actually deceased. To soften the last infliction, nature almost invariably veils it under a low delirium or absolute unconsciousness.

4. It is impossible to imagine a more obvious and unquestionable principle of philosophy, than that every reasoning faculty of our nature must declare to us, loudly and unequivocally, and with an influence as strong as reason can command, that it is wisdom, nay, the dictate of the least portion of common sense, to dread, to resist, to repine, to groan, as little as possible in view of an endurance absolutely inevitable. If it be hard to sustain when met with a fearless, resigned, and unmurmuring spirit, it must certainly be still harder when we are obliged to bend our necks to it with the excruciating addition of shrinking fear, dreadful anticipation, and ineffectual struggles to evade it, and with murmurs and groans at finding the inutility of these efforts. Innumerable examples prove to us that nature has kindly endowed us with reason and mental vigour to such an extent, that, under the influence of right motive and training, no possible form of suffering can be presented over which this power may not manifest, and has not manifested, a complete triumph.

Of these innumerable examples, it is only necessary to cite those of the martyrs of all forms of religion. These prove farther, that this undaunted self-possession, in every conceivable shape and degree of agony, was not the result of a rare and peculiar temperament, a want of sensibility, or the possession of uncommon physical courage; that it was not because there was no perception of danger, or susceptibility of pain; this magnanimity, this impassibility to fear, and pain, and death, has been exhibited, in nearly equal degrees, by people of every age, each sex, and all conditions. Let the proper motive be supplied, let the martyr have had the common influence of the training of his faith, and the consequence failed not. All the shades and varieties of natural and mental difference of character were noted in the deportment of the sufferers. But they were alike in the stern proof of a courage which defied death. The fact is proved by them as strongly as moral fact can be proved, that the mind of every individual might find in itself native self-possession and

vigour, to enable it to display an entire ascendancy over fear, pain, and death.

Nor does this fact rest solely for support on the history of martyrs, or sufferers at an *Auto da fé*, or by torture in any of its forms. We could find examples of it in every department of history, and every view of human character. The red men of our wilderness, as we have elsewhere seen, are still more astonishing illustrations of this fact—I say astonishing, because the timid and effeminate white man shivers, and scarcely credits his senses, as he sees the young Indian warrior smoking his pipe, singing his songs, boasting of his victories, and uttering his menaces, when enveloped in a slow fire, apparently as unmoved, as reckless, and unconscious of pain as if sitting at his ease in his own cabin. All that has been found necessary by this strange people, to procure this heroism, is, that the children from boyhood should be constantly under a discipline, every part and every step of which tends directly to shame and contempt at the least manifestation of cowardice in view of any danger, or of a shrinking consciousness of pain in the endurance of any suffering. The males, so trained, never fail to evidence the fruit of their discipline. Sentenced to death, they almost invariably scorn to fly from their sentence, when escape is in their power. If in debt, they desire a reprieve, that they may hunt until their debts are paid. They then voluntarily return and surrender themselves to the executioner. Nothing is more common than for a friend to propose to suffer for his friend, a parent for a child, or a child for a parent. When the sufferer receives the blow, there is an unblenching look, which manifests the presence of the same spirit that smokes with apparent unconcern amidst the crackling flames.

A proof that this is the fruit of training, and not of native insensibility, as others have thought, and as I formerly thought myself, is, that this contempt of pain and death is considered a desirable trait only in the males. To fly, like a woman, like her to laugh, and weep, and groan, are expressions of contempt, which they apply to their enemies with ineffable scorn. The females, almost excluded from witnessing the process of Spartan discipline by which the males acquire their mental hardihood,

partake not of the fruits of it, and with some few exceptions, are shrinking and timid, like the children of civilization.

I know that there will not be wanting those who will condemn alike the training and the heroism, as harsh, savage, unfeeling, stoical, and unworthy to be admitted as an adjunct to civilization. But no one will offer to deny that the primitive Christian put in conflict with a hungry lion, that Rogers at the Smithfield stake, that the young captive warrior, exulting and chanting his songs while enduring the bitterest agonies that man can inflict, in the serene and sublime triumph of mind over matter, and spirit over the body, is the most imposing spectacle we can witness, the clearest proof we can contemplate, that we have that within us which is not all of clay, nor all mortal; or doubt, that these persons endure infinitely less physical pain, in consequence of their heroic self-possession, than they would have suffered had they met their torture in paroxysms of terror, shrinking, and self-abandonment.

However we may reason, however we may decry these views, as savage, impracticable, unnatural, and undesirable, the fact is, that we all feel alike upon this subject. The thousands in a Roman amphitheatre only evinced a trait that belongs to our common nature, when they instantly, and without consulting each other, gave the signal to save that gladiator who most clearly manifested cool self-possession and contempt of death. After witnessing the execution of a criminal who shows courage, the spectators go away describing, with animated gesture, and in terms of admiration, the fearlessness of the fellow the moment before his death. We all speak with unmixed satisfaction of the circumstance, in the death of our friends, that they departed in the conscious dignity of self-possession and hope. All readers are moved with one sensation as they read the record of the noble trait in the character of Cæsar, gracefully folding himself in his mantle, after he had received so many mortal thrusts. Few of us hear unmoved of the old English patriot who requested the executioner to support him up the steps to the scaffold, adding that he would shift for himself to get down; or of the other who cried, as he stooped his head to the block, *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*.

*mori!* If I recollect, it is Silliman who gives the affecting notice of the last hours of the duke of Richmond, the late governor general of Canada. Invested with all conceivable circumstances to render life desirable, he was bitten by a favourite dog in a rabid state, and died in the most excruciating tortures of the terrible hydrophobia. When the horrible paroxysm was felt by him to be approaching, he was accustomed to nerve his sinking courage by these words: "Henry, remember that none of your ancestors were cowards." I give the trait from recollection, but have heard substantially the same account from other sources. This is the secret of the perverse general admiration of warriors, and heroes, and great generals. It is this principle in its blindness which finds a niche of favour in so many hearts for duellists. In a word, intrepidity, deny it who may, is the trait which finds more universal favour with human nature in general than any other. Why? Because we are weak and frail beings, exposed to innumerable pains and dangers; and the quality we most frequently need, is courage. Without it life is a living death, a long agony of fear. With it we die but once, enduring at the most but a momentary pang, never anticipated, never embittering a moment in advance with imaginary suffering.

We have no hesitation in affirming, that it would be no more difficult to educate the coming generation of civilized people to this spirit, than it is to impart it to the whole race of males among the red men. However inferior we may count these people in comparison with ourselves in other respects, they have at least one manifest advantage over us; they never torment themselves, because they know they must die. \*

But we are told that the actual possession of this spirit would produce such a recklessness of life, that the great ends of Providence would be defeated; and people would expose themselves to death with so little concern, that the race would waste away and become extinct. We never need combat a theory, an abstract opinion, when the case can be settled by a fact. Is it so with the warriors of the red men? On the contrary, can another people be found so wary, so adroit to evade, or resist danger, so fertile in expedients to save life? The coward of their number meets the

death he would fly; and the intrepid warrior puts forth all the resources of his instinctive sagacity, all his keen and practised discernment, to discover the best means of evasion. If he must meet that death, which his skill cannot evade, nor his powers resist, he instantly settles down upon the resource of his invincible heroism of endurance.

In fact, one of the direct fruits of the intrepidity we would wish to see universal, is, that it will give its possessor all possible chances for preserving health and life. It saves him from the influence of fear, a passion among the most debilitating and adverse to life of any to which our nature is subject. Braced by his courage, he passes untouched amidst a contagious epidemic, to which the timid and apprehensive nature falls a victim. In danger it gives him coolness and self-command, to discover and avail himself of all his chances of wise resistance, or probable escape. In sickness he has all the aids to recover which nature allows, in being delivered from the most dangerous symptom in innumerable maladies, the debilitating persuasion of the patient, that he shall not rise from his sickness. In a word, the direct reverse of the charge is the fact. The wise and enlightened fearlessness, which I consider it so important to acquire, is in every way as much the preserver of life, as it is indispensable to happiness; as cowardice proverbially runs in the face of the hideous monster that it creates.

5. The fact, that an evil is felt to be alleviated, which is shared in common with all around us, has been generally recognised, though this perverted sympathy has been traced to the basest selfishness by a humiliating analysis of our nature, which I have neither space nor inclination to develope. We all know that the same person, who is most beneficent, most active in his benevolence, and large in his wishes to do good, would shrink from a great calamity which he saw himself destined to encounter for the first and the last among his whole race. But inform him, that by an impartial award he shares it in common with all his kind, and you reconcile him at once to his lot. Whether the spirit of his resignation in this case be pure, or polluted in its origin, it is not my present purpose to inquire. It is sufficient to

be assured, that there is such a feeling deeply inherent in human nature. The suffering patient, as he lays himself down to part from all friends, to be severed from all ties, to see the green earth, the bright sun, and the visible heavens no more, and to be conscious that the everlasting circle of ages will continue its revolutions without ever bringing him back to the forsaken scene, cannot repine, that he has been put upon this bitter trial alone. He must be deeply conscious, view it in what aspect he may, that it presents no new harshness nor horror to him. Of all the countless millions that have passed away and been replaced by others, like the vernal leaves, death has stood before every solitary individual of the mighty mass, the same phantom king of terrors. Each has contemplated the same inexorable, irreversible award, been held in the same suspense of hopes and fears, and compelled to endure the same struggles. Looking upon the immense mortal drama of ages, the actors seem slowly and imperceptibly to enter and depart from the scene. But in the lapse of one short age, the hopes, fears, loves, and hatreds of all the countless millions have vanished, to be replaced by those of another generation. The heart swells at the recollection how much each of these mortals must have endured, in this stern and inevitable encounter, as measured by our own suffering in the same case. It is only necessary for the patient to extend his vision a few years in advance of his own decease; and his friends, his children, his visitants, all that surround him, will in their turn recline on the same bed. Who cannot feel the palpable folly of repining at an evil shared with all that have been, are, or will be!

“Not to thy eternal resting place,

Shalt thou retire alone : \* \* \*

\* \* \* Thou shalt lie down

With patriarchs of the infant world, with kings,  
The powerful of the earth, the wise, the good,  
Fair forms and hoary seers of ages past,  
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills,  
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun ; the vales  
Stretching in pensive quietness between ;  
The venerable woods, rivers that move

In majesty, and the complaining brooks  
That make the meadows green, and, poured round all,  
Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste,  
Are but the solemn decorations all  
Of the great tomb of man."

6. Philosophers and moralists will readily admit, that the only easy and adequate remedy for the fear of death is the hope of immortality. On the other hand, they whose vocation it is to question and decry the aids which reason and philosophy offer in the case, as sullen, cold, stoical, will not deny, that "innumerable" examples have been offered in all countries, and in all time, of men, who, in virtue of no higher discipline than that of reason and philosophy, have met death with such unshaking and invincible firmness as could hardly have been rendered more illustrious by any additional motives. They have shown, beyond all question, that nature has furnished us with a power of resistance, which, when rightly called forth, enables us to triumph over fear and death. The pagans of ancient story, the unbelieving of Christian lands, the red men of our forests, offer us demonstrations to any extent. I am aware, in what places this simplest of all truth is weekly denied. Those for whom I write are of the number who exact the truth, and I have no fear to declare it; nor would I contend for a moment with such as deny this fact.

But I am not the less sensible that the triumph in these cases is bitter and painful. It can only be obtained by a violence done to instinctive nature, connected with innumerable revulsions and horrors, and to all those ineffable clingings to earth, and shrinkings from the first step into the unknown land, that are partly the heritage of nature, and partly the result of the concurrent influence of all our institutions. It is a violence to all the passions, affections, hopes, and fears, fostered by the earth. But the victory has been wrought, and can be wrought, even though the bosom in which it is wrought become as of iron.

But the same triumph is won by the hope of immortality, by a process, simple, easy, natural, in entire consonance with the most tender affections and lively sympathies of flesh and blood. We lie down in pain and agony with a spirit of easy endurance, if we

have a confident persuasion that, during the night, we shall have shaken off the cause of our sufferings, and shall rise to renewed health and freshness in the morning. Death can bring little terror to him who believes that its darkness will instantly be replaced by the light of another scene: and that the separation from friends in the visible land is only rejoining the more numerous group who have already become citizens of the invisible country.

To what extent am I the subject of this hope myself; and whence do I derive my belief? These are questions which affection will ask, and the answers, if devoid of interest *now*, will not be so when the *memory of things that were shall come over the mind of the reader like a cloud*, and when read as the thoughts of one who, during his whole sojourn, felt and reflected intensely upon those subjects, and who will then himself have passed away to the experience of all that which is here matter of discussion. Those most dear to me will know what relations I sustained to these subjects during the best part of my life; and will not be without solicitude to know my final thoughts upon them; thoughts, purified at least from all stain of party interest and *esprit du corps*, and put forth in the simple consciousness of my own convictions, however they may be powerless to produce belief in the mind of any other. With the fierce war-cry of sects in religion, in their acrimonious and never-ending contests about abstract terms without a meaning, their combats about the vague and technical phrases of formulas of faith, I have long since had nothing to do. For many years they have rung on my ear like the distant thunder of clouds that have passed by. To the denunciations of those who assume to hold all truth imprisoned in their articles of confession, if I might hope the distinction of receiving them, I am perfectly callous. Neither would I desire to add another book to the millions of volumes of polemic theology which already exist, and which have as little bearing upon the knowledge, virtue, and happiness of the age as the last year's snow.

We are, after all, unconsciously influenced, and that in no slight degree by authority, however humble may be its claims, as

a test of truth. How did such a person believe on such a point? Many a young aspirant suspends his opinion until he hears; and settles into fixed persuasions afterwards. How many are there, in Christian lands especially, who have never had a wandering or unbelieving doubt of the soul's immortality float over their minds? How many who have had no terrene and gross ideas influenced by seeing the tenement of flesh, by which all that was called the mind and the soul stood visible to the eye, and tangible to the thought, yielded up to consumption and decay? This is a question which no one can answer for another. For myself, I believe unhesitatingly, and with no stain of doubt, that I shall, in some way exactly provided for by Him who made me, exist after death, as simply conscious that I am the same person as I am now in the morning that I slept at night. Do I derive this conviction from books and reasonings? I am by no means sure that I do; though the gospel assuredly speaks directly to my heart. I do ready homage to the talents and learning of Clarke, Locke, Paley, Channing, and a cloud of reasoning witnesses, of whom every Christian may well be proud; and, most of all, to the profound and admirable Butler.

I hear the author of our faith directly declaring a resurrection and immortality. A single asservation from such a source were enough. But I find him reasoning and insisting less upon the fact than I should have expected, had he intended to implant it in the mind as it were a truth chiefly to be apprehended by the understanding. It seems to me that he so discusses it as one who was aware that it was already inwoven in the sentiments and hearts of his hearers, vague, dark, without moral consequence, it may be; but an existing sentiment, taken for granted, upon which he might predicate his doctrines, as upon a thousand other facts, which we can clearly perceive, he considers already admitted by his hearers.

Let a man walk in the fields on a June morning after night showers. Let him seat himself for meditation on the hill-side, under the grateful canopy of foliage. Let him ask himself to embody his conceptions of the divinity, and to give form and place to the Author of the glorious scene outstretched before

him. He may have just risen from reading the admirable demonstrations of Clarke, and the astronomical sermons of Chalmers. He may concentrate his conceptions by a fixedness of study, that may amount to pain. He may bewilder his faculties in attempting to embody something that his thoughts and reasonings can grasp. I know not what the powers of others can achieve in this case; but I know by painful experiment what mine cannot. I ask my understanding and reasoning powers about this glorious Being. They inform me that it is a subject that comes not within their purview. They can follow the chain of reasoning, see that every link is complete, and the demonstration irresistible. But when they wish to avail themselves of their new truth, they have no distinct idea either of premises or conclusion. It has evaporated in the analysis.

I ask my heart, or the source of my moral sentiment, be it what it may, the same question. The grateful verdure, the matin freshness, the glad voices, the aroma of flowers, the earth, the rolling clouds, the sun, all the lamps that will burn in the firmament by night, my own happy consciousness in witnessing this impressive scene, cry out *a God*. To my heart, it is the first, the simplest, most obvious thought, presenting itself, it seems to me, as soon as the consciousness of my own existence; certainly susceptible of as little doubt. I have no need to define, analyze, embody. The moment I attempt to do it my thoughts are vague and unsettled. I yield myself to the conviction. My heart swells with gratitude, confidence, love. So good, so beneficent a Being can do nothing but good, in this or any other world, to him who loves and trusts him, and strives to obey his laws.

My most treasured hopes of immortality are from the same source. Will this conscious being, capable of such remote excursions into the two eternities between which its existence is suspended, live beyond the present life? Not a particle of matter, for ought that appears, can be annihilated. Will the nobler thoughts, the warmer affections perish, as though they had not been? We ask our senses, and they can give us no hope. The body lives, and we speak of it as including the conscious being. We see it die, pass under the empire of corruption,

moulder, and incorporate with its kindred elements. The sensible evidence, that the person exists, is entirely destroyed. The most insatiate appetite of our natures, however, craves continued existence, and ceases not to seek for it. The inquirer after immortality cannot but be in earnest in this pursuit. The arguments of the venerable sages of old are spread before him. From the soul's nature, from the unity of consciousness, the incorruptibility of thought, the everlasting progress of which our faculties are capable, the strong and unquenchable desire of posthumous fame, the sacredness of earthly friendships, and similar arguments, they strove to establish on the basis of reasoning, the conviction of immortality.

From these reasonings he repairs to the Scriptures. A strange book, utterly unlike any writings that had appeared before, declares that we shall exist for ever. The religion which has arisen from this book, in its whole structure and dispensation, is predicated on the assumed fact, that we shall exist for ever in another life, happy or miserable, according to our deeds on earth. Jesus, *the author and finisher of this faith*, announces himself *the resurrection and the life*; with a voice of power calls his dead friend from the tomb; declares that death has no power over himself; that, after suffering a violent death, on the third day from that event he shall arise from the dead. He arises according to his promise and, in the midst of his awe-struck friends, he visibly ascends to his own celestial sphere. Millions, as by one impulse, catch the spirit of this wonderful book—love each other with a new and single-hearted affection, as unlike the spirit of all former ties of kindness and love, as the doctrines of this religion are different from those of paganism. The new sect look with a careless eye upon whatever is transitory; and will submit to privation, derision, and torture of whatever form, rather than waver or equivocate in declaring themselves subjects of this hope of immortality. This Christian hope, in every period from the time of its author, has made its way to the heart of millions, who have laid themselves down on their last bed, and felt the approach of their last sleep, expecting as confidently to open their eyes on an eternal morning, as

the weary labourer, at his evening rest, trusts that he shall see the brightness of the morrow's dawn.

I recur, with new and unsated satisfaction, to these arguments for the soul's immortality. I love to evoke the venerable shades of Socrates, and Plato, and Cicero, and hear them, each in his own way persuade himself, that the thoughts and affections of which he was conscious could only belong to an immortal spirit. I listen to the eloquent and impressive apostrophe of Tacitus, to the conscious spirit of him whose life he had so charmingly delineated, with feelings which I cannot well describe.

“Si quis piorum manibus locus; si, ut sapientibus placet, non cum corpore extinguntur magnæ animæ, placide quiescas; nosque, domum tuam, ab infirmo desiderio, et muliebris lamentis, ad contemplationem virtutum tuarum voces, quas neque lugeri, neque plangi fas est: admiratione te potius temporalibus laudibus, et, si natura suppeditet, similitudine decor emus.” \*

I repair with new confidence and hope to the gospel, and strive to imbibe the cheering conviction, as I hear Paul sublimely declare, *that this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality, and that death shall be swallowed up in victory.*

I have no disposition to deny that these arguments would be, in themselves, insufficient to turn the balance against the evidence of the senses, and produce the conviction of immortality from the deductions of simple reason, if religion were an impression to be raised and sustained by argument. But if we are religious, in some form, from our very constitution, if immortality be felt as a sentiment, with more or less clearness and force, I deem that these arguments have their appropriate effect in giving form and direction to this interior sentiment; that believers have been such, because these doctrines have found a concurrent sympathy in their spirit, a suitableness to the wants of their heart, a development of the germ of their hopes. It seems to me, that whoever has a heart, cannot look upon the earth and the firmament without exclaiming, “There is a God,” nor within himself without a conviction that his soul is immortal.

\* Tacit. *Vit. Agricolæ, ad fin.*

I see in the enthusiasm,—the embraces, cries, tears, swoonings, and the revolting extravagances of various sects under the influence of high religious excitement, nothing more than the morbid development of this latent religious sentiment. Instead of being, as scoffers affirm, subjects of a mere factitious intoxication, these people, who seem only to demand wings to soar aloft, are only manifesting the unregulated action of nature working at the bottom of their hearts.

For myself I feel that I am immortal, and that those fellow-sojourners, to whom I have been attached by the affection of long intimacy, and the reception of many and great kindnesses, will exist with me hereafter. I pretend to conceive nothing, I wish to inquire nothing about the mode, the place, and circumstances. I should as soon think of disturbing myself by endeavouring to conceive the ideas that might be imparted by a sixth sense. It is sufficient that my heart declares that a being who has seen this glorious world, cherished these warm affections, entertained these illimitable aspirations, felt these longings after immortality, indulged "*these thoughts that wander through eternity,*" cannot have been doomed by Him who gave them to have them quenched for ever in annihilation. Even an illusion so glorious would be worth purchasing at the price of a world. I would affirm, even to repetition, that there is given us that high and stern power which implies a courage superior to any conflict, and which gives the mind a complete ascendancy over any danger, pain, or torture, which belongs to life or death. But we would not be so extravagant, as for a moment to question that death, as the present generation have been trained, and as we are accustomed, by all we see and hear to view it, is a formidable evil, fitly characterized by its dread name, *The king of terrors.* Many a debilitating interior misgiving will assail the stoutest mind in certain moments in view of it. There are dark intervals by night, in the midnight hours of pain, periods between the empire of sleep and active reason, when the terrific and formless image rushes in its terror and indefiniteness upon the mind. As age steals upon us, and the vivid perceptions, and the bright dreams of youth disappear, many a dark shadow will cloud the sunshine of the soul. The

conflict in which all these terrors are overcome by unaided nature and reason, is, as has been seen, a cruel one. The tender sensibilities, the keen affections, the dear and delusive hopes of our nature must all be crushed before we can be unmoved in the endurance of the pain and torture that precede, and the death that follows.

It is only to a firm and unhesitating faith that it becomes as easy and natural to die as to sleep. Glorious and blessed hope, the hope of meeting our friends in the eternal land of those who truly and greatly live for ever! There we shall renew our youth, and *mount as on the wings of eagles.*

“But we shall meet, but we shall meet,  
Where parting tears shall cease to flow :  
And, when I think thereon, almost I long to go !”

Note 62, page 183.

That is an unworthy opponent who assails what assumes to be important truth, by no better argument than ridicule and sarcasm. That is a despicable one, unworthy of exciting any feelings but those of pity and contempt, who attempts to bring to bear upon it the blind and fierce prejudices of the multitude. This last is the prevalent mode of modern attack. By those who deem that wisdom will die with them, and that they can learn nothing more, who dogmatize without examining, and measure the views of others by their own preconceived and settled opinions, all the foregoing doctrines, which militate with the established prejudices and habits of the age, will be denounced, I am aware, as heretical, imaginary, false.

“He would teach people how to be happy,” say they, with a sneer, “as though they were not compelled to pursue happiness by a law of their natures.” My business is not with such opponents, and I should consider their opposition an honour and a distinction.

The fact will remain true, be it welcomed, be it ridiculed, as it may, that a few in all time, have found the means of being more comfortable and happy, than others in the same circumstances.

■ They had a method of their own in creating this difference.  
■ That method might be so indicated, as to be reduced to general and settled rules. This is the amount of the foregoing doctrines. The object has been to discuss and fix some of those rules. No moralist was ever so stupid as to expect that the world would not pursue its headlong course, inculcate what he might. Every one who understands the analogy of the present to the past, will expect that no form of virtuous effort will be screened from question and ridicule ; and that no purity of purpose will conquer the blind and fierce hate of the multitude.

But there will still be a few quiet, reflecting, and philosophic people. What is better, the number will be always increasing. For such, are these my labours, and those which I have adopted from another, chiefly designed. Their suffrage is an ample reward. Their plaudit is true fame. If they say, "We and those about us may be better and happier, let us make the effort to become so," my object is attained.

To encourage us to shake off the superincumbent load of indifference, ridicule, and opposition, and to make efforts to extend virtue and happiness, it is a sublime reflection, that a thought may outlive an empire. Babylon and Thebes are now nowhere to be found ; but the moral lessons of the cotemporary wise and good, despised and disregarded, perhaps, in their day, have descended to us and are to be found everywhere. As the seminal principles of plants, borne through the wide spaces of the air by their downy wings, find at length a congenial spot in which to settle down and vegetate, these seeds of virtue and happiness, floating down the current of time, are still arrested, from age to age, by some kindred mind, in which they germinate, and produce their golden fruit. No intellect can conjecture, in how many instances, and to what degree, every fit moral precept may have come between the reason and passions of some one, balancing between the course of happiness and ruin, and may have inclined the scale in his favour. The consciousness of even an effort to achieve one such triumph is a sufficient satisfaction to a virtuous mind.

**ERRATA.**

**Page 45, last line, dele the 5.**

**Page 206, for Note 5, read Note 6.**

Just Published, with a Frontispiece and Woodcuts, Price 1s. 6d. half bd.  
**THE TEACHER'S GIFT TO HIS PUPILS.**

In foolscap 12mo., with a Plate, Price 1s. 6d. half bound,  
**SARAH AND HER COUSINS ; or, Goodness better than Knowledge.**

**GRADATIONS IN READING AND SPELLING,**  
Upon an entirely new and original Plan ; by which Disyllables are rendered as easy as Monosyllables. By **HENRY BUTTER**, Author of the " *Etymological Spelling Book and Expositor, &c.*" 1s. bound.









